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MY BROTHERS. THE DOGS.

A. THOMAS Sc.

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1865.

Gymnasia.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN REVEALED.



HE first cool breathings of the coming dawn fluttered through the open window as Mr. Brock read the closing lines of the Confession. He put it from him in silence, without looking up. The first shock of discovery had struck his mind, and had passed away again. At his age, and with his habits of thought, his grasp was not strong enough to hold the whole revelation that had fallen on him. All his heart, when he closed the manuscript, was with the memory of the woman who had been the beloved friend of his later and happier life; all his thoughts were busy with the miserable secret of her treason to her own master which the letter had disclosed.

He was startled out of the narrow limits of his own little grief by the vibration of the table at which he sat, under a hand that was laid on it

heavily. The instinct of reluctance was strong in him; but he conquered it, and looked up. There, silently confronting him in the mixed light of the yellow candle-flame and the faint grey dawn, stood the castaway of the village inn—the inheritor of the fatal Armadale name.

Mr. Brock shuddered as the terror of the present time, and the darker terror yet of the future that might be coming, rushed back on him at the sight of the man's face. The man saw it, and spoke first.

"Is my father's crime looking at you out of *my eyes*?" he asked. "Has the ghost of the drowned man followed me into the room?"

The suffering and the passion that he was forcing back, shook the hand that he still kept on the table, and stifled the voice in which he spoke until it sank to a whisper.

"I have no wish to treat you otherwise than justly and kindly," answered Mr. Brock. "Do me justice on my side, and believe that I am incapable of cruelly holding you responsible for your father's crime."

The reply seemed to compose him. He bowed his head in silence, and took up the confession from the table.

"Have you read this through?" he asked quietly.

"Every word of it, from first to last."

"Have I dealt openly with you so far? Has Ozias Midwinter——"

"Do you still call yourself by that name," interrupted Mr. Brock, "now your true name is known to me?"

"Since I have read my father's confession," was the answer, "I like my ugly alias better than ever. Allow me to repeat the question which I was about to put to you a minute since—Has Ozias Midwinter done his best, thus far, to enlighten Mr. Brock?"

The rector evaded a direct reply. "Few men in your position," he said, "would have had the courage to show me that letter!"

"Don't be too sure, sir, of the vagabond you picked up at the inn till you know a little more of him than you know now. You have got the secret of my birth, but you are not in possession yet of the history of my life. You ought to know it, and you shall know it before you leave me alone with Mr. Armadale. Will you wait, and let me talk? or shall I tell it you now?"

"Now," said Mr. Brock, still as far away as ever from knowing the real character of the man before him.

Everything Ozias Midwinter said, everything Ozias Midwinter did, was against him. He had spoken with a sardonic indifference, almost with an insolence of tone, which would have repelled the sympathies of any man who heard him. And now, instead of placing himself at the table, and addressing his story directly to the rector, he withdrew silently and ungraciously to the window-seat. Then he bent his face averted; his hands mechanically turning the leaves of his father's letter till he came to the last. With his eyes fixed on the closing lines of the manuscript, and with a strange mixture of recklessness

and sadness in his voice, he began his promised narrative in these words :—

"The first thing you know of me," he said, "is what my father's confession has told you already. He mentions here that I was a child, asleep on his breast, when he spoke his last words in this world, and when a stranger's hand wrote them down for him at his death-bed. That stranger's name, as you may have noticed, is signed on the cover—'Alexander Neal, Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh.' The first recollection I have is of Alexander Neal beating me with a horsewhip (I daresay I deserved it), in the character of my stepfather."

"Have you no recollection of your mother at the same time?" asked Mr. Brock.

"Yes; I remember her having shabby old clothes made up to fit me, and having fine new frocks bought for her two children by her second husband. I remember the servants laughing at me in my old things, and the horsewhip finding its way to my shoulders again, for losing my temper and tearing my shabby clothes. My next recollection gets on to a year or two later. I remember myself locked up in a lumber-room, with a bit of bread and a mug of water, wondering what it was that made my mother and my stepfather seem to hate the very sight of me. I never settled that question till yesterday, and then I solved the mystery, when my father's letter was put into my hands. My mother knew what had really happened on board the French timber-ship, and my step-father knew what had really happened, and they were both well aware that the shameful secret which they would fain have kept from every living creature, was a secret which would be one day revealed to me. There was no help for it—the confession was in the executor's hands, and there was I, an ill-conditioned brat, with my mother's negro blood in my face, and my murdering father's passions in my heart, inheritor of their secret in spite of them! I don't wonder at the horsewhip now, or the shabby old clothes, or the bread and water in the lumber-room. Natural penalties all of them, sir, which the child was beginning to pay already for the father's sin."

Mr. Brock looked at the swarthy, secret face, still obstinately turned away from him. "Is this the stark insensibility of a vagabond?" he asked himself, "or the despair in disguise of a miserable man?"

"School is my next recollection," the other went on. "A cheap place in a lost corner of Scotland. I was left there, with a bad character to help me at starting. I spare you the story of the master's cane in the school-room, and the boys' kicks in the playground. I daresay there was ingrained ingratitude in my nature; at any rate, I ran away. The first person who met me asked my name. I was too young and too foolish to know the importance of concealing it, and, as a matter of course, I was taken back to school the same evening. The result taught me a lesson which I have not forgotten since. In a day or two more, like the vaga-

bond I was, I ran away for the second time. The school watch-dog had had his instructions, I suppose : he stopped me before I got outside the gate. Here is his mark, among the rest, on the back of my hand. His master's marks I can't show you—they are all on my back. Can you believe in my perversity ? There was a devil in me that no dog could worry out ; I ran away again as soon as I left my bed ; and this time I got off. At nightfall I found myself (with a pocketful of the school oatmeal) lost on a moor. I lay down on the fine soft heather, under the lee of a great grey rock. Do you think I felt lonely ? Not I ! I was away from the master's cane, away from my schoolfellows' kicks, away from my mother, away from my stepfather ; and I lay down that night under my good friend the rock, the happiest boy in all Scotland ! ”

Through the wretched childhood which that one significant circumstance disclosed, Mr. Brock began to see dimly how little was really strange, how little really unaccountable, in the character of the man who was now speaking to him.

“ I slept soundly,” Midwinter continued, “ under my friend the rock. When I woke in the morning, I found a sturdy old man with a fiddle, sitting on one side of me, and two dancing dogs in scarlet jackets on the other. Experience had made me too sharp to tell the truth, when the man put his first questions. He didn't press them—he gave me a good breakfast out of his knapsack, and he let me romp with the dogs. ‘ I'll tell you what,’ he said, when he had got my confidence in this manner, ‘ you want three things, my man ; you want a new father, a new family, and a new name. I'll be your father ; I'll let you have the dogs for your brothers ; and if you'll promise to be very careful of it, I'll give you my own name into the bargain. Ozias Midwinter, junior, you have had a good breakfast—if you want a good dinner, come along with me ! ’ He got up ; the dogs trotted after him, and I trotted after the dogs. Who was my new father ? you will ask. A half-bred gipsy, sir ; a drunkard, a ruffian, and a thief—and the best friend I ever had ! Isn't a man your friend who gives you your food, your shelter, and your education ? Ozias Midwinter taught me to dance the Highland fling ; to throw somersaults ; to walk on stilts ; and to sing songs to his fiddle. Sometimes we roamed the country, and performed at fairs. Sometimes we tried the large towns, and enlivened bad company over its cups. I was a nice lively little boy of eleven years old—and bad company, the women especially, took a fancy to me and my nimble feet. I was vagabond enough to like the life. The dogs and I lived together, ate and drank, and slept together. I can't think of those poor little four-footed brothers of mine, even now, without a choking in the throat. Many is the beating we three took together ; many is the hard day's dancing we did together ; many is the night we have slept together, and whimpered together, on the cold hill-side. I'm not trying to distress you, sir ; I'm only telling you the truth. The life with all its hardships was a life that fitted me, and the half-bred gipsy who gave me his name, ruffian as he was, was a ruffian I liked.”

"A man who beat you!" exclaimed Mr. Brock, in astonishment.

"Didn't I tell you just now, sir, that I lived with the dogs? and did you ever hear of a dog who liked his master the worse for beating him? Hundreds of thousands of miserable men, women, and children would have liked that man (as I liked him) if he had always given them what he always gave me—plenty to eat. It was stolen food mostly, and my new gipsy father was generous with it. He seldom laid the stick on us when he was sober; but it diverted him to hear us yelp when he was drunk. He died drunk, and enjoyed his favourite amusement with his last breath. One day (when I had been two years in his service), after giving us a good dinner out on the moor, he sat down with his back against a stone, and called us up to divert himself with his stick. He made the dogs yelp first, and then he called to me. I didn't go very willingly—he had been drinking harder than usual, and the more he drank the better he liked his after-dinner amusement. He was in high good-humour that day, and he hit me so hard that he toppled over, in his drunken state, with the force of his own blow. He fell with his face in a puddle, and lay there without moving. I and the dogs stood at a distance, and looked at him: we thought he was feigning, to get us near and have another stroke at us. He feigned so long that we ventured up to him at last. It took me some time to pull him over—he was a heavy man. When I did get him on his back, he was dead. We made all the outcry we could; but the dogs were little, and I was little, and the place was lonely; and no help came to us. I took his fiddle, and his stick; I said to my two brothers, 'Come along, we must get our own living now;' and we went away heavy-hearted, and left him on the moor. Unnatural as it may seem to you, I was sorry for him. I kept his ugly name through all my after-wanderings, and I have enough of the old leaven left in me to like the sound of it still. Midwinter or Armadale, never mind my name now—we will talk of that afterwards; you must know the worst of me first."

"Why not the best of you?" said Mr. Brock, gently.

"Thank you, sir,—but I am here to tell the truth. We will get on, if you please, to the next chapter in my story. The dogs and I did badly, after our master's death—our luck was against us. I lost one of my little brothers—the best performer of the two; he was stolen, and I never recovered him. My fiddle and my stilts were taken from me next, by main force, by a tramp who was stronger than I. These misfortunes drew Tommy and me—I beg your pardon, sir, I mean the dog—closer together than ever. I think we had some kind of dim foreboding on both sides, that we had not done with our misfortunes yet; anyhow, it was not very long before we were parted for ever. We were neither of us thieves (our master had been satisfied with teaching us to dance); but we both committed an invasion of the rights of property, for all that. Young creatures, even when they are half-starved, cannot resist taking a run sometimes, on a fine morning. Tommy and I could not resist taking

a run into a gentleman's plantation ; the gentleman preserved his game ; and the gentleman's keeper knew his business. I heard a gun go off—you can guess the rest. God preserve me from ever feeling such misery again, as I felt when I lay down by Tommy, and took him, dead and bloody, in my arms ! The keeper attempted to part us—I bit him, like the wild animal I was. He tried the stick on me next—he might as well have tried it on one of the trees. The noise reached the ears of two young ladies, riding near the place—daughters of the gentleman on whose property I was a trespasser. They were too well brought up to lift their voices against the sacred right of preserving game, but they were kind-hearted girls, and they pitied me, and took me home with them. I remember the gentlemen of the house (keen sportsmen all of them) roaring with laughter as I went by the windows, crying, with my little dead dog in my arms. Don't suppose I complain of their laughter ; it did me good service—it roused the indignation of the two ladies. One of them took me into her own garden, and showed me a place where I might bury my dog under the flowers, and be sure that no other hands should ever disturb him again. The other went to her father, and persuaded him to give the forlorn little vagabond a chance in the house, under one of the upper servants. Yes ! you have been cruising in company with a man who was once a footboy. I saw you look at me, when I amused Mr. Armadale by laying the cloth on board the yacht. Now you know why I laid it so neatly, and forgot nothing. It has been my good fortune to see something of Society ; I have helped to fill its stomach and black its boots. My experience of the servants' hall was not a long one. Before I had worn out my first suit of livery, there was a scandal in the house. It was the old story ; there is no need to tell it over again for the thousandth time. Loose money left on a table, and not found there again ; all the servants with characters to appeal to except the footboy, who had been rashly taken on trial. Well ! well ! I was lucky in that house to the last ; I was not prosecuted for taking what I had not only never touched, but never even seen—I was only turned out. One morning, I went in my old clothes to the grave where I had buried Tommy. I gave the place a kiss ; I said good-by to my little dead dog ; and there I was, out in the world again, at the ripe age of thirteen years ! "

" In that friendless state, and at that tender age," said Mr. Brock, " did no thought cross your mind of going home again ? "

" I went home again, sir, that very night—I slept on the hill-side. What other home had I ? In a day or two's time, I drifted back to the large towns and the bad company,—the great open country was so lonely to me, now I had lost the dogs ! Two sailors picked me up next ; I was a handy lad, and I got a cabin-boy's berth on board a coasting-vessel. A cabin-boy's berth means dirt to live in, oil to eat, a man's work on a boy's shoulders, and the rope's-end at regular intervals. The vessel touched at a port in the Hebrides. I was as ungrateful as usual to my best benefactors—I ran away again. Some women found me, half-dead

of starvation, in the northern wilds of the Isle of Skye. It was near the coast, and I took a turn with the fishermen next. There was less of the rope's-end among my new masters; but plenty of exposure to wind and weather, and hard work enough to have killed a boy who was not a seasoned tramp like me. I fought through it till the winter came, and then the fishermen turned me adrift again. I don't blame them—food was scarce, and mouths were many. With famine staring the whole community in the face, why should they keep a boy who didn't belong to them? A great city was my only chance in the winter time; so I went to Glasgow, and all but stepped into the lion's mouth as soon as I got there. I was minding an empty cart on the Broomielaw, when I heard my stepfather's voice on the pavement-side of the horse by which I was standing. He had met some person whom he knew, and, to my terror and surprise, they were talking about me. Hidden behind the horse, I heard enough of their conversation to know that I had narrowly escaped discovery before I went on board the coasting-vessel. I had met, at that time, with another vagabond boy, of my own age; we had quarrelled and parted. The day after, my stepfather's inquiries were made in that very district; and it became a question with him (a good personal description being unattainable in either case) which of the two boys he should follow. One of them, he was informed, was known as "Brown," and the other as "Midwinter." Brown was just the common name which a cunning runaway boy would be most likely to assume; Midwinter, just the remarkable name which he would be most likely to avoid. The pursuit had accordingly followed Brown, and had allowed me to escape. I leave you to imagine whether I was not doubly and trebly determined to keep my gipsy master's name after that. But my resolution did not stop here. I made up my mind to leave the country altogether. After a day or two's lurking about the outward-bound vessels in port, I found out which sailed first, and hid myself on board. Hunger tried hard to force me out before the pilot had left; but hunger was not new to me, and I kept my place. The pilot was out of the vessel when I made my appearance on deck, and there was nothing for it but to keep me or throw me overboard. The captain said (I have no doubt quite truly) that he would have preferred throwing me overboard; but the majesty of the law does sometimes stand the friend even of a vagabond like me. In that way I came back to a sea life. In that way, I learnt enough to make me handy and useful (as I saw you noticed) on board Mr. Armadale's yacht. I sailed more than one voyage, in more than one vessel, to more than one part of the world; and I might have followed the sea for life, if I could only have kept my temper under every provocation that could be laid on it. I had learnt a great deal—but, not having learnt that, I made the last part of my last voyage home to the port of Bristol in irons; and I saw the inside of a prison for the first time in my life, on a charge of mutinous conduct to one of my officers. You have heard me with extraordinary patience, sir, and I am glad to tell you, in return, that we are not far now from the end of my

story.' You found some books, if I remember right, when you searched my luggage at the Somersetshire inn ?'

Mr. Brock answered in the affirmative.

" Those books mark the next change in my life—and the last, before I took the usher's place at the school. My term of imprisonment was not a long one. Perhaps my youth pleaded for me; perhaps the Bristol magistrates took into consideration the time I had passed in irons on board ship. Anyhow, I was just turned seventeen, when I found myself out on the world again. I had no friends to receive me; I had no place to go to. A sailor's life, after what had happened, was a life I recoiled from in disgust. I stood in the crowd on the bridge at Bristol, wondering what I should do with my freedom now I had got it back. Whether I had altered in the prison, or whether I was feeling the change in character that comes with coming manhood, I don't know; but the old reckless enjoyment of the old vagabond life seemed quite worn out of my nature. An awful sense of loneliness kept me wandering about Bristol, in horror of the quiet country, till after nightfall. I looked at the lights kindling in the parlour windows, with a miserable envy of the happy people inside. A word of advice would have been worth something to me at that time. Well ! I got it : a policeman advised me to move on. He was quite right —what else could I do ? I looked up at the sky, and there was my old friend of many a night's watch at sea, the north star. ' All points of the compass are alike to me,' I thought to myself; ' I'll go *your way*.' Not even the star would keep me company that night. It got behind a cloud, and left me alone in the rain and darkness. I groped my way to a cart-shed, fell asleep, and dreamed of old times, when I served my gipsy master and lived with the dogs. God ! what I would have given when I woke to have felt Tommy's little cold muzzle in my hand ! Why am I dwelling on these things? why don't I get on to the end ? You shouldn't encourage me, sir, by listening so patiently. After a week more of wandering, without hope to help me, or prospects to look to, I found myself in the streets of Shrewsbury, staring in at the windows of a bookseller's shop. An old man came to the shop-door, looked about him, and saw me. ' Do you want a job ? ' he asked. ' And are you not above doing it cheap ? ' The prospect of having something to do, and some human creature to speak a word to, tempted me, and I did a day's dirty work in the bookseller's warehouse, for a shilling. More work followed at the same rate. In a week, I was promoted to sweep out the shop, and put up the shutters. In no very long time after, I was trusted to carry the books out; and when quarter-day came, and the shopman left, I took his place. Wonderful luck ! you will say ; here I had found my way to a friend at last. I had found my way to one of the most merciless misers in England ; and I had risen in the little world of Shrewsbury by the purely commercial process of underselling all my competitors. The job in the warehouse had been declined at the price by every idle man in the town—and I did it. The regular porter received his weekly pittance

under weekly protest.—I took two shillings less, and made no complaint. The shopman gave warning on the ground that he was underfed as well as underpaid. I received half his salary, and lived contentedly on his reversionary scraps. Never were two men so well suited to each other as that bookseller and I! His one object in life was to find somebody who would work for him at starvation wages. My one object in life was to find somebody who would give me an asylum over my head. Without a single sympathy in common—without a vestige of feeling of any sort, hostile or friendly, growing up between us on either side—without wishing each other good-night, when we parted on the house stairs, or good-morning when we met at the shop counter—we lived alone in that house, strangers from first to last, for two whole years. A dismal existence for a lad of my age, was it not? You are a clergyman and a scholar—surely you can guess what made the life endurable to me?"

Mr. Brock remembered the well-worn volumes which had been found in the usher's bag. "The books made it endurable to you," he said.

The eyes of the castaway kindled with a new light.

"Yes!" he said, "the books—the generous friends who met me without suspicion—the merciful masters who never used me ill! The only years of my life that I can look back on with something like pride, are the years I passed in the miser's house. The only unalloyed pleasure I have ever tasted, is the pleasure that I found for myself on the miser's shelves. Early and late, through the long winter nights and the quiet summer days, I drank at the fountain of knowledge, and never wearied of the draught. There were few customers to serve—for the books were mostly of the solid and scholarly kind. No responsibilities rested on me—for the accounts were kept by my master, and only the small sums of money were suffered to pass through my hands. He soon found out enough of me to know that my honesty was to be trusted, and that my patience might be counted on, treat me as he might. The one insight into his character which I obtained, on my side, widened the distance between us to its last limits. He was a confirmed opium-eater in secret—a prodigal in laudanum, though a miser in all besides. He never confessed his frailty, and I never told him I had found it out. He had his pleasure apart from me; and I had my pleasure apart from him. Week after week, month after month, there we sat without a friendly word ever passing between us—I, alone with my book at the counter: he, alone with his ledger in the parlour, dimly visible to me through the dirty window-pane of the glass door, sometimes poring over his figures, sometimes lost and motionless for hours in the ecstasy of his opium trance. Time passed, and made no impression on us; the seasons of two years came and went, and found us still unchanged. One morning, at the opening of the third year, my master did not appear as usual to give me my allowance for breakfast. I went upstairs, and found him helpless in his bed. He refused to trust me with the keys of the cupboard, or to let

me send for a doctor. I bought a morsel of bread, and went back to my books—with no more feeling for him (I honestly confess it), than he would have had for me under the same circumstances. An hour or two later, I was roused from my reading by an occasional customer of ours, a retired medical man. He went upstairs. I was glad to get rid of him, and return to my books. He came down again, and disturbed me once more. ‘I don’t much like you, my lad,’ he said; ‘but I think it my duty to say that you will soon have to shift for yourself. You are no great favourite in the town, and you may have some difficulty in finding a new place. Provide yourself with a written character from your master before it is too late.’ He spoke to me coldly. I thanked him coldly on my side, and got my character the same day. Do you think my master let me have it for nothing? Not he! He bargained with me on his death-bed. I was his creditor for a month’s salary, and he wouldn’t write a line of my testimonial until I had first promised to forgive him the debt. Three days afterwards, he died, enjoying to the last the happiness of having over-reached his shopman. ‘Aha!’ he whispered, when the doctor formally summoned me to take leave of him, ‘I got you cheap!—Was Ozias Midwinter’s stick as cruel as that? I think not. Well! there I was, out on the world again, but surely with better prospects, this time. I had taught myself to read Latin, Greek, and German; and I had got my written character to speak for me. All useless! The doctor was quite right; I was not liked in the town. The lower order of the people despised me for selling my services to the miser, at the miser’s price. As for the better classes, I did with them (God knows how!) what I have always done with everybody, except Mr. Armadale—I produced a disagreeable impression at first sight; I couldn’t mend it afterwards; and there was an end of me in respectable quarters. It is quite likely I might have spent all my savings, my puny little golden offspring of two years’ miserable growth, but for a school advertisement which I saw in a local paper. The heartlessly mean terms that were offered, encouraged me to apply; and I got the place. How I prospered in it, and what became of me next, there is no need to tell you. The thread of my story is all wound off; my vagabond life stands stripped of its mystery; and you know the worst of me at last.’

A moment of silence followed those closing words. Midwinter rose from the window-seat, and came back to the table with the letter from Wildbad in his hand.

“My father’s confession has told you who I am; and my own confession has told you what my life has been,” he said, addressing Mr. Brock, without taking the chair to which the rector pointed. “I promised to make a clean breast of it when I first asked leave to enter this room. Have I kept my word?”

“It is impossible to doubt it,” replied Mr. Brock. “You have established your claim on my confidence and my sympathy. I should be

insensible indeed if I could know what I now know of your childhood and your youth, and not feel something of Allan's kindness for Allan's friend."

"Thank you, sir," said Midwinter, simply and gravely.

He sat down opposite Mr. Brock at the table for the first time.

"In a few hours you will have left this place," he proceeded. "If I can help you to leave it with your mind at ease, I will. There is more to be said between us than we have said up to this time. My future relations with Mr. Armadale are still left undecided; and the serious question raised by my father's letter is a question which we have neither of us faced yet."

He paused and looked with a momentary impatience at the candle still burning on the table, in the morning light. The struggle to speak with composure, and to keep his own feelings stoically out of view, was evidently growing harder and harder to him.

"It may possibly help your decision," he went on, "if I tell you how I determined to act towards Mr. Armadale—in the matter of the similarity of our names—when I first read this letter, and when I had composed myself sufficiently to be able to think at all." He stopped, and cast a second impatient look at the lighted candle. "Will you excuse the odd fancy of an odd man?" he asked, with a faint smile. "I want to put out the candle—I want to speak of the new subject, in the new light."

He extinguished the candle as he spoke, and let the first tenderness of the daylight flow uninterruptedly into the room.

"I must once more ask your patience," he resumed, "if I return for a moment to myself and my circumstances. I have already told you that my stepfather made an attempt to discover me some years after I had turned my back on the Scotch school. He took that step out of no anxiety of his own, but simply as the agent of my father's trustees. In the exercise of their discretion, they had sold the estates in Barbadoes (at the time of the emancipation of the slaves, and the ruin of West Indian property) for what the estates would fetch. Having invested the proceeds they were bound to set aside a sum for my yearly education. This responsibility obliged them to make the attempt to trace me—a fruitless attempt, as you already know. A little later (as I have been since informed) I was publicly addressed by an advertisement in the newspapers—which I never saw. Later still, when I was twenty-one, a second advertisement appeared (which I did see) offering a reward for evidence of my death. If I was alive, I had a right to my half share of the proceeds of the estates, on coming of age; if dead, the money reverted to my mother. I went to the lawyers, and heard from them what I have just told you. After some difficulty in proving my identity—and, after an interview with my stepfather, and a message from my mother, which has hopelessly widened the old breach between us—my claim was allowed; and my money is now invested for me in the funds, under the name that is really my own."

Mr. Brock drew eagerly nearer to the table. He saw the end now, to which the speaker was tending.

"Twice a year," Midwinter pursued, "I must sign my own name to get my own income. At all other times, and under all other circumstances, I may hide my identity under any name I please. As Ozias Midwinter, Mr. Armadale first knew me—as Ozias Midwinter he shall know me to the end of my days. Whatever may be the result of this interview—whether I win your confidence, or whether I lose it—of one thing you may feel sure. Your pupil shall never know the horrible secret which I have trusted to your keeping. This is no extraordinary resolution—for, as you know already, it costs me no sacrifice of feeling to keep my assumed name. There is nothing in my conduct to praise—it comes naturally out of the gratitude of a thankful man. Review the circumstances for yourself, sir; and set my own horror of revealing them to Mr. Armadale out of the question. If the story of the names is ever told, there can be no limiting it to the disclosure of my father's crime; it must go back to the story of Mrs. Armadale's marriage. I have heard her son talk of her; I know how he loves her memory. As God is my witness, he shall never love it less dearly through me!"

Simply as the words were spoken, they touched the deepest sympathies in the rector's nature: they took his thoughts back to Mrs. Armadale's death-bed. There sat the man against whom she had ignorantly warned him, in her son's interests—and that man, of his own free-will, had laid on himself the obligation of respecting her secret for her son's sake! The memory of his own past efforts to destroy the very friendship out of which this resolution had sprung, rose, and reproached Mr. Brock. He held out his hand to Midwinter for the first time. "In her name, and in her son's name," he said warmly, "I thank you."

Without replying, Midwinter spread the confession open before him on the table.

"I think I have said all that it was my duty to say," he began, "before we could approach the consideration of this letter. Whatever may have appeared strange in my conduct towards you and towards Mr. Armadale, may be now trusted to explain itself. You can easily imagine the natural curiosity and surprise that I must have felt (ignorant as I then was of the truth) when the sound of Mr. Armadale's name first startled me as the echo of my own. You will readily understand that I only hesitated to tell him I was his namesake, because I hesitated to damage my position—in your estimation, if not in his—by confessing that I had come among you under an assumed name. And, after all that you have just heard of my vagabond life and my low associates, you will hardly wonder at the obstinate silence I maintained about myself, at a time when I did not feel the sense of responsibility which my father's confession has laid on me. We can return to these small personal explanations, if you wish it, at another time; they cannot be suffered to keep us from the greater interests which we must settle before you leave this

place. We may come now——” his voice faltered; and he suddenly turned his face towards the window, so as to hide it from the rector’s view. “We may come now,” he repeated, his hand trembling visibly as it held the page, “to the murder on board the timber-ship, and to the warning that has followed me from my father’s grave.”

Softly—as if he feared they might reach Allan, sleeping in the neighbouring room—he read the last terrible words which the Scotchman’s pen had written at Wildbad, as they fell from his father’s lips.

“Avoid the widow of the man I killed—if the widow still lives. Avoid the maid whose wicked hand smoothed the way to the marriage—if the maid is still in her service. And, more than all, avoid the man who bears the same name as your own. Offend your best benefactor, if that benefactor’s influence has connected you one with the other. Desert the woman who loves you, if that woman is a link between you and him. Hide yourself from him, under an assumed name. Put the mountains and the seas between you; be ungrateful; be unforgiving; be all that is most repellent to your own gentler nature, rather than live under the same roof, and breathe the same air with that man. Never let the two Allan Armadales meet in this world; never, never, never!”

After reading those sentences, he pushed the manuscript from him, without looking up. The fatal reserve which he had been in a fair way of conquering but a few minutes since, possessed itself of him once more. Again his eyes wandered; again his voice sank in tone. A stranger who had heard his story, and who saw him now, would have said, “His look is lurking, his manner is bad; he is, every inch of him, his father’s son.”

“I have a question to ask you,” said Mr. Brock, breaking the silence between them, on his side. “Why have you just read that passage in your father’s letter?”

“To force me into telling you the truth,” was the answer. “You must know how much there is of my father in me, before you trust me to be Mr. Armadale’s friend. I got my letter yesterday, in the morning. Some inner warning troubled me, and I went down on the sea-shore by myself, before I broke the seal. Do you believe the dead can come back to the world they once lived in? I believe my father came back in that bright morning light, through the glare of that broad sunshine and the roar of that joyful sea, and watched me while I read. When I got to the words that you have just heard, and when I knew that the very end which he had died dreading, was the end that had really come, I felt the horror that had crept over him in his last moments, creeping over me. I struggled against myself, as he would have had me struggle. I tried to be all that was most repellent to my own gentler nature; I tried to think pitilessly of putting the mountains and the seas between me and the man who bore my name. Hours passed before I could prevail on myself to go back and run the risk of meeting Allan Armadale in this house. When I did get back, and when he met me at night on the stairs, I thought I was looking him in the face as

my father looked *his* father in the face when the cabin door closed between them. Draw your own conclusions, sir. Say, if you like, that the inheritance of my father's heathen belief in Fate is one of the inheritances he has left to me. I won't dispute it; I won't deny that all through yesterday *his* superstition was *my* superstition. The night came before I could find my way to calmer and brighter thoughts. But I did find my way. You may set it down in my favour that I lifted myself at last above the influence of this horrible letter. Do you know what helped me ? "

" Did you reason with yourself ? "

" I can't reason about what I feel."

" Did you quiet your mind by prayer ? "

" I was not fit to pray."

" And yet something guided you to the better feeling and the truer view ? "

" Something did."

" What was it ? "

" My love for Allan Armadale."

He cast a doubting, almost a timid, look at Mr. Brock as he gave that answer ; and, suddenly leaving the table, went back to the window-seat.

" Have I no right to speak of him in that way ? " he asked, keeping his face hidden from the rector. " Have I not known him long enough; have I not done enough for him yet ? Remember what my experience of other men had been, when I first saw his hand held out to me; when I first heard his voice speaking to me in my sick room. What had I known of strangers' hands all through my childhood ? I had only known them as hands raised to threaten and to strike me. *His* hand put my pillow straight, and patted me on the shoulder, and gave me my food and drink. What had I known of other men's voices, when I was growing up to be a man myself ? I had only known them as voices that jeered, voices that cursed, voices that whispered in corners with a vile distrust. *His* voice said to me, 'Cheer up, Midwinter ! we'll soon bring you round again. You'll be strong enough in a week to go out for a drive with me in our Somersetshire lanes.' Think of the gipsy's stick; think of the devils laughing at me when I went by their windows with my little dead dog in my arms; think of the master who cheated me of my month's salary on his death-bed—and ask your own heart if the miserable wretch whom Allan Armadale has treated as his equal and his friend, has said too much in saying that he loves him ? I do love him ! It will come out of me—I can't keep it back. I love the very ground he treads on ! I would give my life—yes, the life that is precious to me now, because his kindness has made it a happy one—I tell you I would give my life——"

The next words died away on his lips; the hysterical passion rose, and conquered him. He stretched out one of his hands with a wild gesture of entreaty to Mr. Brock; his head sank on the window-sill, and he burst into tears.

Even then, the hard discipline of the man's life asserted itself. He expected no sympathy; he counted on no merciful human respect for human weakness. The cruel necessity of self-suppression was present to his mind, while the tears were pouring over his cheeks. "Give me a minute," he said, faintly. "I'll fight it down in a minute; I won't distress you in this way again."

True to his resolution, in a minute he had fought it down. In a minute more he was able to speak calmly.

"We will get back, sir, to those better thoughts which brought me last night from my room to yours," he resumed. "I can only repeat that I should never have torn myself from the hold which this letter fastened on me, if I had not loved Allan Armadale with all that I have in me of a brother's love. I said to myself, 'If the thought of leaving him breaks my heart, the thought of leaving him is wrong!' That was some hours since—and I am in the same mind still. I can't believe—I won't believe—that a friendship which has grown out of nothing but kindness on one side, and nothing but gratitude on the other, is destined to lead to an evil end. I don't undervalue the strange circumstances which have made us namesakes—the strange circumstances which have brought us together, and attached us to each other—the strange circumstances which have since happened to us separately. They may, and they do, all link themselves together in my thoughts; but they shall not daunt me. I won't believe that these events have happened in the order of Fate, for an end that is evil—I will believe that they have happened in the order of God, for an end that is good. Judge, you who are a clergyman, between the dead father, whose word is in these pages, and the living son, whose word is now on his lips! Which am I—now that the two Allan Armaiales have met again in the second generation—an instrument in the hands of Fate, or an instrument in the hands of Providence? What is it appointed me to do—now that I am breathing the same air, and living under the same roof with the son of the man whom my father killed—to perpetuate my father's crime by mortally injuring him? or to atone for my father's crime by giving him the devotion of my whole life? The last of those two faiths is my faith—and shall be my faith, happen what may. In the strength of that better conviction, I have come here to trust you with my father's secret, and to confess the wretched story of my own life. In the strength of that better conviction, I can face you resolutely with the one plain question, which marks the one plain end of all that I have come here to say. Your pupil stands at the starting-point of his new career, in a position singularly friendless; his one great need is a companion of his own age on whom he can rely. The time has come, sir, to decide whether I am to be that companion or not. After all you have heard of Oxias Midwinter, tell me plainly, will you trust him to be Allan Armadale's friend?"

Mr. Brock met that fearlessly frank question by a fearless frankness on his side.

"I believe you love Allan," he said ; "and I believe you have spoken the truth. A man who has produced that impression on me, is a man whom I am bound to trust. I trust you."

Midwinter started to his feet—his dark face flushing deep ; his eyes fixed brightly and steadily, at last, on the rector's face. "A light!" he exclaimed, tearing the pages of his father's letter, one by one, from the fastening that held them. "Let us destroy the last link that holds us to the horrible past ! Let us see this confession a heap of ashes before we part!"

"Wait!" said Mr. Brock. "Before you burn it, there is a reason for looking at it once more."

The parted leaves of the manuscript dropped from Midwinter's hands. Mr. Brock took them up, and sorted them carefully until he found the last page.

"I view your father's superstition as you view it," said the rector. "But there is a warning given you here, which you will do well (for Allan's sake, and for your own sake,) not to neglect. The last link with the past will not be destroyed when you have burnt these pages. One of the actors in this story of treachery and murder is not dead yet. Read those words."

He pushed the page across the table, with his finger on one sentence. Midwinter's agitation misled him. He mistook the indication, and read, "Avoid the widow of the man I killed—if the widow still lives."

"Not that sentence," said the rector. "The next."

Midwinter read it : "Avoid the maid whose wicked hand smoothed the way to the marriage—if the maid is still in her service."

"The maid and the mistress parted," said Mr. Brock, "at the time of the mistress's marriage. The maid and the mistress met again at Mrs. Armadale's residence in Somersetshire, last year. I myself met the woman in the village, and I myself know that her visit hastened Mrs. Armadale's death. Wait a little, and compose yourself; I see I have startled you."

He waited as he was bid, his colour fading away to a grey paleness, and the light in his clear brown eyes dying out slowly. What the rector had said had produced no transient impression on him ; there was more than doubt, there was alarm in his face, as he sat lost in his own thoughts. Was the struggle of the past night renewing itself already ? Did he feel the horror of his hereditary superstition creeping over him again ?

"Can you put me on my guard against her?" he asked, after a long interval of silence. "Can you tell me her name?"

"I can only tell you what Mrs. Armadale told me," answered Mr. Brock. "The woman acknowledged having been married in the long interval since she and her mistress had last met. But not a word more escaped her about her past life. She came to Mrs. Armadale to ask for money, under a plea of distress. She got the money, and she left the house, positively refusing, when the question was put to her, to mention her married name."

" You saw her yourself in the village. What was she like ? "

" She kept her veil down. I can't tell you."

" You can tell me what you *did* see ? "

" Certainly. I saw, as she approached me, that she moved very gracefully, that she had a beautiful figure, and that she was a little over the middle height. I noticed, when she asked me the way to Mrs. Arma-dale's house, that her manner was the manner of a lady, and that the tone of her voice was remarkably soft and winning. Lastly, I remembered afterwards, that she wore a thick black veil, a black bonnet, a black silk dress, and a red Paisley shawl. I feel all the importance of your possessing some better means of identifying her than I can give you. But, unhappily——"

He stopped. Midwinter was leaning eagerly across the table, and Midwinter's hand was laid suddenly on his arm.

" Is it possible that you know the woman ? " asked Mr. Brock, surprised at the sudden change in his manner.

" No."

" What have I said, then, that has startled you so ? "

" Do you remember the woman who threw herself from the river steamer ? " asked the other—" the woman who caused that succession of deaths, which opened Allan Arma-dale's way to the Thorpe-Ambrose estate ? "

" I remember the description of her in the police report," answered the rector.

" *That* woman," pursued Midwinter, " moved gracefully, and had a beautiful figure. *That* woman wore a black veil, a black bonnet, a black silk gown, and a red Paisley shawl——" He stopped, released his hold of Mr. Brock's arm, and abruptly resumed his chair. " Can it be the same ? " he said to himself, in a whisper. " Is there a fatality that follows men in the dark ? And is it following *us* in that woman's footsteps ? "

If the conjecture was right, the one event in the past which had appeared to be entirely disconnected with the events that had preceded it, was, on the contrary, the one missing link which made the chain complete. Mr. Brock's comfortable common sense instinctively denied that startling conclusion. He looked at Midwinter with a compassionate smile.

" My young friend," he said kindly, " have you cleared your mind of all superstition as completely as you think ? Is what you have just said worthy of the better resolution at which you arrived last night ? "

Midwinter's head drooped on his breast; the colour rushed back over his face : he sighed bitterly.

" You are beginning to doubt my sincerity," he said. " I can't blame you."

" I believe in your sincerity as firmly as ever," answered Mr. Brock. " I only doubt whether you have fortified the weak places in your nature as strongly as you yourself suppose. Many a man has lost the battle

against himself far oftener than you have lost it yet, and has nevertheless won his victory in the end. I don't blame you, I don't distrust you. I only notice what has happened, to put you on your guard against yourself. Come! come! Let your own better sense help you; and you will agree with me, that there is really no evidence to justify the suspicion that the woman whom I met in Somersetshire, and the woman who attempted suicide in London, are one and the same. Need an old man, like me, remind a young man, like you, that there are thousands of women in England, with beautiful figures—thousands of women who are quietly dressed in black silk gowns and red Paisley shawls?"

Midwinter caught eagerly at the suggestion; too eagerly, as it might have occurred to a harder critic on humanity than Mr. Brock.

" You are quite right, sir," he said, " and I am quite wrong. Tens of thousands of women answer the description, as you say. I have been wasting time on my own idle fancies, when I ought to have been carefully gathering up facts. If this woman ever attempts to find her way to Allan, I must be prepared to stop her." He began searching restlessly among the manuscript leaves scattered about the table, paused over one of the pages, and examined it attentively. " This helps me to something positive," he went on; " this helps me to a knowledge of her age. She was twelve at the time of Mrs. Arnadale's marriage; add a year, and bring her to thirteen; add Allan's age (twenty-two), and we make her a woman of five-and-thirty at the present time. I know her age; and I know that she has her own reasons for being silent about her married life. This is something gained at the outset, and it may lead, in time, to something more." He looked up brightly again at Mr. Brock. " Am I in the right way now, sir? Am I doing my best to profit by the caution which you have kindly given me?"

" You are vindicating your own better sense," answered the rector, encouraging him to trample down his own imagination, with an Englishman's ready distrust of the noblest of the human faculties. " You are paving the way for your own happier life."

" Am I?" said the other, thoughtfully.

He searched among the papers once more, and stopped at another of the scattered pages.

" The Ship!" he exclaimed suddenly, his colour changing again, and his manner altering on the instant.

" What ship?" asked the rector.

" The ship in which the deed was done," Midwinter answered, with the first signs of impatience that he had shown yet. " The ship in which my father's murderous hand turned the lock of the cabin door."

" What of it?" said Mr. Brock.

He appeared not to hear the question; his eyes remained fixed intently on the page that he was reading.

" A French vessel, employed in the timber-trade," he said, still speaking to himself; " a French vessel, named *La Grace de Dieu*. If

my father's belief had been the right belief—if the Fatality had been following me, step by step, from my father's grave—in one or other of my voyages, I should have fallen in with that ship." He looked up again at Mr. Brock. "I am quite sure about it now," he said. "Those women are two—and not one."

Mr. Brock shook his head.

"I am glad you have come to that conclusion," he said. "But I wish you had reached it in some other way."

Midwinter started passionately to his feet, and seizing on the pages of the manuscript with both hands, flung them into the empty fire-place.

"For God's sake, let me burn it!" he exclaimed. "As long as there is a page left, I shall read it. And, as long as I read it, my father gets the better of me, in spite of myself!"

Mr. Brock pointed to the match-box. In another moment, the confession was in flames. When the fire had consumed the last morsel of paper, Midwinter drew a deep breath of relief.

"I may say, like Macbeth: 'Why, so, being gone, I am a man again!'" he broke out with a feverish gaiety. "You look fatigued, sir; and no wonder," he added in a lower tone. "I have kept you too long from your rest—I will keep you no longer. Depend on my remembering what you have told me; depend on my standing between Allan and any enemy, man or woman, who comes near him. Thank you, Mr. Brock; a thousand, thousand times, thank you! I came into this room the most wretched of living men; I can leave it now as happy as the birds that are singing outside!"

As he turned to the door, the rays of the rising sun streamed through the window, and touched the heap of ashes lying black in the black fire-place. The sensitive imagination of Midwinter kindled instantly at the sight.

"Look!" he said, joyously. "The promise of the Future shining over the ashes of the Past!"

An inexplicable pity for the man, at the moment of his life when he needed pity least, stole over the rector's heart, when the door had closed, and he was left by himself again.

"Poor fellow!" he said, with an uneasy surprise at his own compassionate impulse. "Poor fellow!"

CHAPTER III.

DAY AND NIGHT.

The morning hours had passed; the noon had come and gone; and Mr. Brock had started on the first stage of his journey home.

After parting from the rector in Douglas Harbour, the two young men had returned to Castletown, and had there separated at the hotel

door,—Allan walking down to the waterside to look after his yacht, and Midwinter entering the house, to get the rest that he needed after a sleepless night.

He darkened his room; he closed his eyes—but no sleep came to him. On this first day of the rector's absence, his sensitive nature extravagantly exaggerated the responsibility which he now held in trust for Mr. Brock. A nervous dread of leaving Allan by himself, even for a few hours only, kept him waking and doubting until it became a relief, rather than a hardship, to rise from the bed again, and following in Allan's footsteps, to take the way to the waterside which led to the yacht.

The repairs of the little vessel were nearly completed. It was a breezy, cheerful day; the land was bright, the water was blue, the quick waves leapt crisply in the sunshine, the men were singing at their work. Descending to the cabin, Midwinter discovered his friend busily occupied in attempting to set the place to rights. Habitually the least systematic of mortals, Allan now and then awoke to an overwhelming sense of the advantages of order—and on such occasions a perfect frenzy of tidiness possessed him. He was down on his knees, hotly and wildly at work, when Midwinter looked in on him; and was fast reducing the neat little world of the cabin to its original elements of chaos, with a misdirected energy wonderful to see.

"Here's a mess!" said Allan, rising composedly on the horizon of his own accumulated litter. "Do you know, my dear fellow, I begin to wish I had let well alone."

Midwinter smiled, and came to his friend's assistance with the natural neat-handedness of a sailor.

The first object that he encountered was Allan's dressing-case, turned upside down, with half the contents scattered on the floor, and with a duster and a hearth-broom lying among them. Replacing the various objects which formed the furniture of the dressing-case one by one, Midwinter lighted unexpectedly on a miniature portrait, of the old-fashioned oval form, primly framed in a setting of small diamonds.

"You don't seem to set much value on this," he said. "What is it?"

Allan bent over him, and looked at the miniature.

"It belonged to my mother," he answered; "and I set the greatest value on it. It is a portrait of my father."

Midwinter put the miniature abruptly into Allan's hands, and withdrew to the opposite side of the cabin.

"You know best where the things ought to be put in your own dressing-case," he said, keeping his back turned on Allan. "I'll make the place tidy on this side of the cabin, and you shall make the place tidy on the other."

He began setting in order the litter scattered about him, on the cabin table and on the floor. But it seemed as if fate had decided that his friend's personal possessions should fall into his hands that morning, employ them where he might. One among the first objects which he

took up was Allan's tobacco-jar, with the stopper missing, and with a letter (which appeared by the bulk of it to contain enclosures) crumpled into the mouth of the jar in the stopper's place.

"Did you know that you had put this here?" he asked. "Is the letter of any importance?"

Allan recognized it instantly. It was the first of the little series of letters which had followed the cruising party to the Isle of Man—the letter which young Armadale had briefly referred to as bringing him "more worries from those everlasting lawyers," and had then dismissed from further notice as recklessly as usual.

"This is what comes of being particularly careful," said Allan; "here is an instance of my extreme thoughtfulness. You may not think it, but I put the letter there on purpose. Every time I went to the jar, you know, I was sure to see the letter; and every time I saw the letter, I was sure to say to myself, 'This must be answered.' There's nothing to laugh at; it was a perfectly sensible arrangement—if I could only have remembered where I put the jar. Suppose I tie a knot in my pocket-handkerchief this time? You have a wonderful memory, my dear fellow. Perhaps you'll remind me in the course of the day, in case I forget the knot next."

Midwinter saw his first chance, since Mr. Brock's departure, of usefully filling Mr. Brock's place.

"Here is your writing-case," he said; "why not answer the letter at once? If you put it away again, you may forget it again."

"Very true," returned Allan. "But the worst of it is, I can't quite make up my mind what answer to write. I want a word of advice. Come and sit down here, and I'll tell you all about it."

With his loud boyish laugh—echoed by Midwinter, who caught the infection of his gaiety—he swept a heap of miscellaneous encumbrances off the cabin sofa, and made room for his friend and himself to take their places. In the high flow of youthful spirits, the two sat down to their trifling consultation over a letter lost in a tobacco-jar. It was a memorable moment to both of them, lightly as they thought of it at the time. Before they had risen again from their places, they had taken the first irrevocable step together on the dark and tortuous road of their future lives.

Reduced to plain facts, the question on which Allan now required his friend's advice, may be stated as follows:—

While the various arrangements connected with the succession to Thorpe-Ambrose were in progress of settlement, and while the new possessor of the estate was still in London, a question had necessarily arisen relating to the person who should be appointed to manage the property. The steward employed by the Blanchard family had written, without loss of time, to offer his services. Although a perfectly competent and trustworthy man, he failed to find favour in the eyes of the new

proprietor. Acting, as usual, on his first impulses, and resolved, at all hazards, to install Midwinter as a permanent inmate at Thorpe-Ambrose, Allan had determined that the steward's place was the place exactly fitted for his friend—for the simple reason, that it would necessarily oblige his friend to live with him on the estate. He had accordingly written to decline the proposal made to him, without consulting Mr. Brock, whose disapproval he had good reason to fear; and without telling Midwinter, who would probably (if a chance were allowed him of choosing) have declined taking a situation which his previous training had by no means fitted him to fill. Further correspondence had followed this decision, and had raised two new difficulties which looked a little embarrassing on the face of them, but which Allan, with the assistance of his lawyers, easily contrived to solve. The first difficulty, of examining the outgoing steward's books, was settled by sending a professional accountant to Thorpe-Ambrose; and the second difficulty, of putting the steward's empty cottage to some profitable use (Allan's plans for his friend comprehending Midwinter's residence under his own roof), was met by placing the cottage on the list of an active house-agent in the neighbouring county town. In this state the arrangements had been left when Allan quitted London. He had heard and thought nothing more of the matter, until a letter from the lawyers had followed him to the Isle of Man, enclosing two proposals to occupy the cottage—both received on the same day—and requesting to hear, at his earliest convenience, which of the two he was prepared to accept.

Finding himself, after having conveniently forgotten the subject for some days past, placed face to face once more with the necessity for decision, Allan now put the two proposals into his friend's hands, and, after a rambling explanation of the circumstances of the case, requested to be favoured with a word of advice. Instead of examining the proposals, Midwinter unceremoniously put them aside, and asked the two very natural and very awkward questions of who the new steward was to be, and why he was to live in Allan's house?

"I'll tell you who, and I'll tell you why, when we get to Thorpe-Ambrose," said Allan. "In the meantime, we'll call the steward X. Y. Z., and we'll say he lives with me, because I'm devilish sharp, and I mean to keep him under my own eye. You needn't look surprised. I know the man thoroughly well; he requires a good deal of management. If I offered him the steward's place beforehand, his modesty would get in his way, and he would say—'No.' If I pitch him into it neck and crop, without a word of warning and with nobody at hand to relieve him of the situation, he'll have nothing for it but to consult my interests, and say—'Yes.' X. Y. Z. is not at all a bad fellow, I can tell you. You'll see him when we go to Thorpe-Ambrose; and I rather think you and he will get on uncommonly well together."

The humorous twinkle in Allan's eye, the sly significance in Allan's voice, would have betrayed his secret to a prosperous man. Midwinter

was as far from suspecting it as the carpenters who were at work above them on the deck of the yacht.

"Is there no steward now on the estate?" he asked, his face showing plainly that he was far from feeling satisfied with Allan's answer. "Is the business neglected all this time?"

"Nothing of the sort!" returned Allan. "The business is going with 'a wet sheet and a flowing sail, and a wind that follows free.' I'm not joking—I'm only metaphorical. A regular accountant has poked his nose into the books, and a steady-going lawyer's clerk attends at the office once a week. That doesn't look like neglect, does it? Leave the new steward alone for the present, and just tell me which of those two tenants you would take, if you were in my place."

Midwinter opened the proposals, and read them attentively.

The first proposal was from no less a person than the solicitor at Thorpe-Ambrose, who had first informed Allan at Paris of the large fortune that had fallen into his hands. This gentleman wrote personally, to say that he had long admired the cottage, which was charmingly situated within the limits of the Thorpe-Ambrose grounds. He was a bachelor, of studious habits, desirous of retiring to a country seclusion after the wear and tear of his business hours; and he ventured to say that Mr. Armadale, in accepting him as a tenant, might count on securing an unobtrusive neighbour, and on putting the cottage into responsible and careful hands.

The second proposal came through the house-agent, and proceeded from a total stranger. The tenant who offered for the cottage, in this case, was a retired officer in the army—one Major Milroy. His family merely consisted of an invalid wife and an only child—a young lady. His references were unexceptionable ; and he, too, was especially anxious to secure the cottage, as the perfect quiet of the situation was exactly what was required by Mrs. Milroy in her feeble state of health.

"Well! which profession shall I favour?" asked Allan. "The army or the law?"

"There seems to me to be no doubt about it," said Midwinter. "The lawyer has been already in correspondence with you ; and the lawyer's claim is, therefore, the claim to be preferred."

"I knew you would say that. In all the thousands of times I have asked other people for advice, I never yet got the advice I wanted. Here's this business of letting the cottage as an instance. I'm all on the other side myself. I want to have the major."

"Why?"

Young Armadale laid his forefinger on that part of the agent's letter which enumerated Major Milroy's family, and which contained the three words—"a young lady."

"A bachelor of studious habits walking about my grounds," said Allan, "is not an interesting object; a young lady is. I have not the least doubt Miss Milroy is a charming girl. Ozias Midwinter of the

serious countenance ! think of her pretty muslin dress flitting about among your trees and committing trespasses on your property ; think of ~~her~~ adorable feet trotting into your fruit-garden, and her delicious fresh lips kissing your ripe peaches ; think of her dimpled hands among your early violets, and her little cream-coloured nose buried in your blush-roses ! What does the studious bachelor offer me, in exchange for the loss of all this ? He offers me a rheumatic brown object in gaiters and a wig. No ! no ! Justice is good, my dear friend ; but, believe me, Miss Milroy is better."

"Can you be serious about any mortal thing, Allan ? "

"I'll try to be, if you like. I know I ought to take the lawyer ; but what can I do if the major's daughter keeps running in my head ? "

Midwinter returned resolutely to the just and the sensible view of the matter, and pressed it on his friend's attention with all the persuasion of which he was master. After listening with exemplary patience until he had done, Allan swept a supplementary accumulation of litter off the cabin table, and produced from his waistcoat-pocket a half-crown coin.

"I've got an entirely new idea," he said. "Let's leave it to chance."

The absurdity of the proposal—as coming from a landlord—was irresistible. Midwinter's gravity deserted him.

"I'll spin," continued Allan, "and you shall call. We must give precedence to the army, of course ; so we'll say Heads, the major; Tails, the lawyer. One spin to decide. Now, then, look out ! "

He spun the half-crown on the cabin table.

"Tails ! " cried Midwinter, humouring what he believed to be one of Allan's boyish jokes.

The coin fell on the table with the Head uppermost.

"You don't mean to say you are ~~really~~ in earnest !" said Midwinter, as the other opened his writing-case and dipped his pen in the ink.

"Oh, but I am, though !" replied Allan. "Chance is on my side, and Miss Milroy's ; and you're outvoted, two to one. It's no use arguing. The major has fallen uppermost, and the major shall have the cottage. I won't leave it to the lawyers—they'll only be worrying me with more letters ; I'll write myself."

He wrote his answers to the two proposals, literally in two minutes. One to the house-agent : "Dear sir, I accept Major Milroy's offer ; let him come in when he pleases. Yours truly, Allan Armadale." And one to the lawyer : "Dear sir, I regret that circumstances prevent me from accepting your proposal. Yours truly, &c., &c." "People make a fuss about letter-writing," Allan remarked, when he had done. "I find it easy enough."

He wrote the addresses on his two notes, and stamped them for the post, whistling gaily. While he had been writing, he had not noticed how his friend was occupied. When he had done, it struck him that a sudden silence had fallen on the cabin ; and, looking up, he observed that Midwinter's whole attention was strangely concentrated on the half-crown,

as it lay head uppermost on the table. Allan suspended his whistling in astonishment.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked.

"I was only wondering," replied Midwinter.

"What about?" persisted Allan.

"I was wondering," said the other, handing him back the half-crown, "whether there is such a thing as chance."

Half-an-hour later, the two notes were posted; and Allan, whose close superintendence of the repairs of the yacht had hitherto allowed him but little leisure-time on shore, had proposed to wile away the idle hours by taking a walk in Castletown. Even Midwinter's nervous anxiety to deserve Mr. Brock's confidence in him, could detect nothing objectionable in this harmless proposal, and the young men set forth together to see what they could make of the metropolis of the Isle of Man.

It is doubtful if there is a place on the habitable globe which, regarded as a sight-seeing investment offering itself to the spare attention of strangers, yields so small a per-centge of interest in return, as Castletown. Beginning with the waterside, there was an inner harbour to see, with a drawbridge to let vessels through; an outer harbour, ending in a dwarf lighthouse; a view of a flat coast to the right, and a view of a flat coast to the left. In the central solitudes of the city, there was a squat grey building called "the castle;" also a memorial pillar dedicated to one Governor Smelt, with a flat top for a statue, and no statue standing on it; also a barrack, holding the half company of soldiers allotted to the island, and exhibiting one spirit-broken sentry at its lonely door. The prevalent colour of the town was faint grey. The few shops open were parted at frequent intervals by other shops closed and deserted in despair. The weary lounging of boatmen on shore was trebly weary here; the youth of the district smoked together in speechless depression under the lee of a dead wall; the ragged children said mechanically, "Give us a penny," and before the charitable hand could search the merciful pocket, lapsed away again in misanthropic doubt of the human nature they addressed. The silence of the grave overflowed the churchyard, and filled this miserable town. But one edifice, prosperous to look at, rose consolatory in the desolation of these dreadful streets. Frequented by the students of the neighbouring "College of King William," this building was naturally dedicated to the uses of a pastrycook's shop. Here, at least (viewed through the friendly medium of the window), there was something going on for a stranger to see; for here, on high stools, the pupils of the college sat, with swinging legs and slowly-moving jaws, and, hushed in the horrid stillness of Castletown, gorged their pastry gravely, in an atmosphere of awful silence.

"Hang me if I can look any longer at the boys and the tarts!" said Allan, dragging his friend away from the pastrycook's shop. "Let's try if we can't find something else to amuse us in the next street."

The first amusing object which the next street presented was a carver-and-gilder's shop, expiring feebly in the last stage of commercial decay. The counter inside displayed nothing to view but the recumbent head of a boy, peacefully asleep in the unbroken solitude of the place. In the window were exhibited to the passing stranger three forlorn little fly-spotted frames; a small posting-bill, dusty with long-continued neglect, announcing that the premises were to let; and one coloured print, the last of a series illustrating the horrors of drunkenness, on the fiercest temperance principles. The composition—representing an empty bottle of gin, an immensely spacious garret, a perpendicular Scripture-reader, and a horizontal expiring family—appealed to public favour, under the entirely unobjectionable title of *The Hand of Death*. Allan's resolution to extract amusement from Castletown by main force had resisted a great deal, but it failed him at this stage of the investigations. He suggested trying an excursion to some other place. Midwinter readily agreeing, they went back to the hotel to make inquiries. Thanks to the mixed influence of Allan's ready gift of familiarity, and total want of method in putting his questions, a perfect deluge of information flowed in on the two strangers, relating to every subject but the subject which had actually brought them to the hotel. They made various interesting discoveries in connection with the laws and constitution of the Isle of Man, and the manners and customs of the natives. To Allan's delight, the Manxmen spoke of England as of a well-known adjacent island, situated at a certain distance from the central empire of the Isle of Man. It was further revealed to the two Englishmen that this happy little nation rejoiced in laws of its own, publicly proclaimed once a year by the governor and the two head-judges, grouped together on the top of an ancient mound, in fancy costumes appropriate to the occasion. Possessing this enviable institution, the island added to it the inestimable blessing of a local parliament, called the House of Keys, an assembly far in advance of the other parliament belonging to the neighbouring island, in this respect—that the members dispensed with the people, and solemnly elected each other. With these, and many more local particulars, extracted from all sorts and conditions of men, in and about the hotel, Allan wiled away the weary time in his own essentially desultory manner, until the gossip died out of itself, and Midwinter (who had been speaking apart with the landlord) quietly recalled him to the matter in hand. The finest coast scenery in the island was said to be to the westward and the southward, and there was a fishing town in those regions called Port St. Mary, with an hotel at which travellers could sleep. If Allan's impressions of Castletown still inclined him to try an excursion to some other place, he had only to say so, and a carriage would be produced immediately. Allan jumped at the proposal, and in ten minutes' more, he and Midwinter were on their way to the western wilds of the island.

With trifling incidents, the day of Mr. Brock's departure had worn on thus far. With trifling incidents, in which not even Midwinter's nervous

watchfulness could see anything to distrust, it was still to proceed, until the night came—a night which one at least of the two companions was destined to remember to the end of his life.

Before the travellers had advanced two miles on their road, an accident happened. The horse fell, and the driver reported that the animal had seriously injured himself. There was no alternative but to send for another carriage to Castletown, or to get on to Port St. Mary on foot. Deciding to walk, Midwinter and Allan had not gone far before they were overtaken by a gentleman driving alone in an open chaise. He civilly introduced himself as a medical man, living close to Port St. Mary, and offered seats in his carriage. Always ready to make new acquaintances, Allan at once accepted the proposal. He and the doctor (whose name was ascertained to be Hawbury) became friendly and familiar before they had been five minutes in the chaise together; Midwinter sitting behind them, reserved and silent, on the back seat. They separated just outside Port St. Mary, before Mr. Hawbury's house, Allan boisterously admiring the doctor's neat French windows, and pretty flower-garden and lawn; and wringing his hand at parting, as if they had known each other from boyhood upwards. Arrived in Port St. Mary, the two friends found themselves in a second Castletown on a smaller scale. But the country round, wild, open, and hilly, deserved its reputation. A walk brought them well enough on with the day—still the harmless, idle day that it had been from the first—to see the evening near at hand. After waiting a little to admire the sun, setting grandly over hill, and heath, and crag, and talking, while they waited, of Mr. Brock and his long journey home—they returned to the hotel to order their early supper. Nearer and nearer, the night, and the adventure which the night was to bring with it, came to the two friends; and still the only incidents that happened were incidents to be laughed at, if they were noticed at all. The supper was badly cooked; the waiting-maid was impenetrably stupid; the old-fashioned bell-rope in the coffee-room had come down in Allan's hands, and striking in its descent a painted china shepherdess on the chimney-piece, had laid the figure in fragments on the floor. Events as trifling as these were still the only events that had happened, when the twilight faded, and the lighted candles were brought into the room.

Finding Midwinter, after the double fatigue of a sleepless night and a restless day, but little inclined for conversation, Allan left him resting on the sofa, and lounged into the passage of the hotel, on the chance of discovering somebody to talk to. Here, another of the trivial incidents of the day brought Allan and Mr. Hawbury together again, and helped—whether happily, or not, yet remained to be seen—to strengthen the acquaintance between them on either side.

The “bar” of the hotel was situated at one end of the passage, and the landlady was in attendance there, mixing a glass of liquor for the doctor, who had just looked in for a little gossip. On Allan's asking permission to make a third in the drinking and the gossiping, Mr. Hawbury civilly

handed him the glass which the landlady had just filled. It contained cold brandy-and-water. A marked change in Allan's face, as he suddenly drew back and asked for whisky instead, caught the doctor's medical eye. "A case of nervous antipathy," said Mr. Hawbury, quietly taking the glass away again. The remark obliged Allan to acknowledge that he had an insurmountable loathing (which he was foolish enough to be a little ashamed of mentioning) to the smell and taste of brandy. No matter with what diluting liquid the spirit was mixed, the presence of it—instantly detected by his organs of taste and smell—turned him sick and faint, if the drink touched his lips. Starting from this personal confession, the talk turned on antipathies in general; and the doctor acknowledged, on his side, that he took a professional interest in the subject, and that he possessed a collection of curious cases at home, which his new acquaintance was welcome to look at, if Allan had nothing else to do that evening, and if he would call, when the medical work of the day was over, in an hour's time.

Cordially accepting the invitation (which was extended to Midwinter also, if he cared to profit by it), Allan returned to the coffee-room to look after his friend. Half asleep and half awake, Midwinter was still stretched on the sofa, with the local newspaper just dropping out of his languid hand.

"I heard your voice in the passage," he said drowsily. "Who were you talking to?"

"The doctor," replied Allan. "I am going to smoke a cigar with him, in an hour's time. Will you come too?"

Midwinter assented with a weary sigh. Always shyly unwilling to make new acquaintances, fatigue increased the reluctance he now felt to become Mr. Hawbury's guest. As matters stood, however, there was no alternative but to go—for, with Allan's constitutional imprudence, there was no safely trusting him alone anywhere, and more especially in a stranger's house. Mr. Brock would certainly not have left his pupil to visit the doctor alone; and Midwinter was still nervously conscious that he occupied Mr. Brock's place.

"What shall we do till it's time to go?" asked Allan, looking about him. "Anything in this?" he added, observing the fallen newspaper, and picking it up from the floor.

"I'm too tired to look. If you find anything interesting, read it out," said Midwinter—thinking that the reading might help to keep him awake.

Part of the newspaper, and no small part of it, was devoted to extracts from books recently published in London. One of the works most largely laid under contribution in this manner, was of the sort to interest Allan: it was a highly-spiced narrative of Travelling Adventures in the wilds of Australia. Pouncing on an extract which described the sufferings of the travelling-party, lost in a trackless wilderness, and in danger of dying by thirst, Allan announced that he had found something to make his friend's flesh creep, and began eagerly to read the passage aloud. Resolute not to sleep, Midwinter

followed the progress of the adventure, sentence by sentence, without missing a word. The consultation of the lost travellers, with death by thirst staring them in the face; the resolution to press on while their strength lasted; the fall of a heavy shower, the vain efforts made to catch the rain-water, the transient relief experienced by sucking their wet clothes; the sufferings renewed a few hours after; the night-advance of the strongest of the party, leaving the weakest behind; the following a flight of birds, when morning dawned; the discovery by the lost men of the broad pool of water that saved their lives—all this, Midwinter's fast failing attention mastered painfully; Allan's voice growing fainter and fainter on his ear, with every sentence that was read. Soon, the next words seemed to drop away gently, and nothing but the slowly-sinking sound of the voice was left. Then, the light in the room darkened gradually; the sound dwindled into delicious silence; and the last waking impressions of the weary Midwinter came peacefully to an end.

The next event of which he was conscious, was a sharp ringing at the closed door of the hotel. He started to his feet, with the ready alacrity of a man whose life has accustomed him to wake at the shortest notice. An instant's look round showed him that the room was empty; and a glance at his watch told him that it was close on midnight. The noise made by the sleepy servant in opening the door, and the tread the next moment of quick footsteps in the passage, filled him with a sudden foreboding of something wrong. As he hurriedly stepped forward to go out and make inquiry, the door of the coffee-room opened, and the doctor stood before him.

"I am sorry to disturb you," said Mr. Hawbury. "Don't be alarmed; there's nothing wrong."

"Where is my friend?" asked Midwinter.

"At the pier-head," answered the doctor. "I am, to a certain extent, responsible for what he is doing now; and I think some careful person, like yourself, ought to be with him."

The hint was enough for Midwinter. He and the doctor set out for the pier immediately—Mr. Hawbury mentioning, on the way, the circumstances under which he had come to the hotel.

Punctual to the appointed hour, Allan had made his appearance at the doctor's house; explaining that he had left his weary friend so fast asleep on the sofa that he had not had the heart to wake him. The evening had passed pleasantly, and the conversation had turned on many subjects—until, in an evil hour, Mr. Hawbury had dropped a hint which showed that he was fond of sailing, and that he possessed a pleasure-boat of his own in the harbour. Excited on the instant by his favourite topic, Allan had left his host no hospitable alternative but to take him to the pier-head and show him the boat. The beauty of the night and the softness of the breeze had done the rest of the mischief—they had filled Allan with irresistible longings for a sail by moonlight. Prevented from accompanying his guest by professional hindrances which obliged him to remain

on shore, the doctor, not knowing what else to do, had ventured on disturbing Midwinter, rather than take the responsibility of allowing Mr. Armadale (no matter how well he might be accustomed to the sea) to set off on a sailing trip at midnight entirely by himself.

The time taken to make this explanation brought Midwinter and the doctor to the pier-head. There, sure enough, was young Armadale in the boat, hoisting the sail, and singing the sailor's " Yo-heave-ho ! " at the top of his voice.

" Come along, old boy ! " cried Allan. " You're just in time for a frolic by moonlight ! "

Midwinter suggested a frolic by daylight, and an adjournment to bed in the meantime.

" Bed ! " cried Allan, on whose harum-scarum high spirits Mr. Hawbury's hospitality had certainly not produced a sedative effect. " Hear him, doctor ! one would think he was ninety ! Bed, you drowsy old dormouse ! Look at that—and think of bed, if you can ! "

He pointed to the sea. The moon was shining in the cloudless heaven ; the night-breeze blew soft and steady from the land ; the peaceful waters rippled joyfully in the silence and the glory of the night. Midwinter turned to the doctor, with a wise resignation to circumstances : he had seen enough to satisfy him that all words of remonstrance would be words simply thrown away.

" How is the tide ? " he asked.

Mr. Hawbury told him.

" Are the oars in the boat ? "

" Yes."

" I am well used to the sea," said Midwinter, descending the pier-steps. " You may trust me to take care of my friend, and to take care of the boat."

" Good-night, doctor ! " shouted Allan. " Your whisky-and-water is delicious—your boat's a little beauty—and you're the best fellow I ever met in my life ! "

The doctor laughed, and waved his hand ; and the boat glided out from the harbour, with Midwinter at the helm.

As the breeze then blew, they were soon abreast of the westward headland, bounding the bay of Poolvash ; and the question was started whether they should run out to sea, or keep along the shore. The wisest proceeding, in the event of the wind failing them, was to keep by the land. Midwinter altered the course of the boat, and they sailed on smoothly in a south-westerly direction, abreast of the coast.

Little by little the cliffs rose in height, and the rocks, massed wild and jagged, showed risted black chasms yawning deep in their seaward sides. Off the bold promontory called Spanish Head, Midwinter looked ominously at his watch. But Allan pleaded hard for half-an-hour more, and for a glance at the famous channel of the Sound, which they were now fast nearing, and of which he had heard some startling stories from the

workmen employed on his yacht. The new change which Midwinter's compliance with this request rendered it necessary to make in the course of the boat, brought her close to the wind; and revealed, on one side, the grand view of the southernmost shores of the Isle of Man, and, on the other, the black precipices of the islet called the Calf, separated from the mainland by the dark and dangerous channel of the Sound.

Once more Midwinter looked at his watch. "We have gone far enough," he said. "Stand by the sheet!"

"Stop!" cried Allan, from the bows of the boat. "Good God! here's a wrecked ship right ahead of us!"

Midwinter let the boat fall off a little, and looked where the other pointed.

There, stranded midway between the rocky boundaries on either side of the Sound—there, never again to rise on the living waters from her grave on the sunken rock; lost and lonely in the quiet night; high, and dark, and ghostly in the yellow moonshine, lay the Wrecked Ship.

"I know the vessel," said Allan, in great excitement. "I heard my workmen talking of her yesterday. She drifted in here, on a pitch dark night, when they couldn't see the lights. A poor old worn-out merchantman, Midwinter, that the shipbrokers have bought to break up. Let's run in, and have a look at her."

Midwinter hesitated. All the old sympathies of his sea-life strongly inclined him to follow Allan's suggestion—but the wind was falling light; and he distrusted the broken water and the swirling currents of the channel ahead. "This is an ugly place to take a boat into, when you know nothing about it," he said.

"Nonsense!" returned Allan. "It's as light as day, and we float in two feet of water."

Before Midwinter could answer, the current caught the boat, and swept them onward through the channel, straight towards the Wreck.

"Lower the sail," said Midwinter quietly, "and ship the oars. We are running down on her fast enough now, whether we like it or not."

Both well accustomed to the use of the oar, they brought the course of the boat under sufficient control to keep her on the smoothest side of the channel—the side which was nearest to the Islet of the Calf. As they came swiftly up with the wreck, Midwinter resigned his oar to Allan; and, watching his opportunity, caught a hold with the boat-hook on the forechains of the vessel. The next moment they had the boat safely in hand, under the lee of the Wreck.

The ship's ladder used by the workmen hung over the forechains. Mounting it, with the boat's rope in his teeth, Midwinter secured one end, and lowered the other to Allan in the boat. "Make that fast," he said, "and wait till I see if it's all safe on board." With those words, he disappeared behind the bulwark.

"Wait?" repeated Allan, in the blankest astonishment at his friend's

excessive caution. "What on earth does he mean? I'll be hanged if I wait—where one of us goes, the other goes too!"

He hitched the loose end of the rope round the forward thwart of the boat; and, swinging himself up the ladder, stood the next moment on the deck. "Anything very dreadful on board?" he inquired sarcastically, as he and his friend met.

Midwinter smiled. "Nothing whatever," he replied. "But I couldn't be sure that we were to have the whole ship to ourselves, till I got over the bulwark, and looked about me."

Allan took a turn on the deck, and surveyed the wreck critically from stem to stern.

"Not much of a vessel," he said; "the Frenchmen generally build better ships than this."

Midwinter crossed the deck, and eyed Allan in a momentary silence.

"Frenchmen?" he repeated, after an interval. "Is this vessel French?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"The men I have got at work on the yacht told me. They know all about her."

Midwinter came a little nearer. His swarthy face began to look, to Allan's eyes, unaccountably pale in the moonlight.

"Did they mention what trade she was engaged in?"

"Yes.—The timber-trade."

As Allan gave that answer, Midwinter's lean brown hand clutched him fast by the shoulder; and Midwinter's teeth chattered in his head, like the teeth of a man struck by a sudden chill.

"Did they tell you her name?" he asked, in a voice that dropped suddenly to a whisper.

"They did, I think. But it has slipped my memory.—Gently, old fellow; those long claws of yours are rather tight on my shoulder."

"Was the name — ?" he stopped; removed his hand; and dashed away the great drops that were gathering on his forehead—"Was the name *La Grace de Dieu*?"

"How the deuce did you come to know it? That's the name, sure enough. *La Grace de Dieu*."

At one bound, Midwinter leapt on the bulwark of the wreck.

"The boat!!!?" he cried, with a scream of horror that rang far and wide through the stillness of the night, and brought Allan instantly to his side.

The lower end of the carelessly-hitched rope was loose on the water; and, a-head, in the track of the moonlight, a small black object was floating out of view. The boat was adrift.

Shakspeare in France.

STUDENTS of dramatic art in general, or of Shakspeare's art in particular, may find their researches illuminated by suggestive and unexpected sidelights, if they examine the fluctuations of opinion in France. We not unfrequently hear, both in England and Germany, that the French mind is incompetent to a genuine appreciation of Shakspeare. All such national incriminations are dangerous, not to say foolish; yet they have all a certain basis; and we may ask ourselves, what is the amount of truth embodied in the present example? That the nation which produced and cherishes Molière should have hesitated in its acceptance of Shakspeare, cannot reasonably be explained on the supposition of national deficiency in the requisite sensibilities, but must be assigned to some want of perfect adaptation in the form of Shakspeare's art to the trained habits of thought and organized tendencies which constitute national taste. And the proof of this is disclosed in the fact that no sooner was there established a successful revolt against certain despotic canons of criticism, and a wider culture had shown that the classic drama was only *one* form of the art, which by no means excluded other and very different forms, than the admiration for Shakspeare as a poet rapidly grew into a sort of superstition. But even then the admiration was rather reflective than instinctive—rather the result of culture than direct emotion. The obstacles to an immediate influence, such as a poet exercises over his own nation, remained. In France, as in England and Germany, there were Shakspeare-bigots; but in France there was no adoption of Shakspeare into the national literature; on the French stage there was no recognized place for him. Whether this want of perfect adaptation between the English poet and the French nation is to be wholly ascribed to the ineradicable differences between the French and English taste, or partly also to the defects in Shakspeare's art, which prevent his overcoming the influence of national differences, is a delicate question. The fact is worthy of notice, that after a century of struggle—after the gradual disappearance of all the arbitrary and pedantic rules which at first opposed the introduction of Shakspeare to the French stage—the enthusiasm of eminent critics, and a literary curiosity on the part of most cultivated readers, have not yet succeeded in overcoming the national indifference. In Germany, Shakspeare is as much at home as in England; the stage and the closet admit him to the foremost place. The Théâtre Français has not yet adopted his plays into its repertory.

The first manifesto of French criticism is to be read in Voltaire, who
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made his countrymen acquainted with the existence of a great poet, as in the case of Newton he made them aware of a supreme mathematician. Much nonsense has been written and spoken respecting Voltaire's ridiculous criticisms ; but whoever looks impartially into this matter will see that the superficiality which is so freely attributed to Voltaire really belongs to his antagonists. He took his stand on certain definite principles ; these principles may have been one-sided, but at any rate they were systematic ; and a man who judges from principles may be wrong, but cannot justly be called superficial by those who judge from none.

Voltaire in his deliberate expressions of opinion undoubtedly shows that he recognized the royal grandeur of Shakspeare's genius. If he regarded it as the grandeur of a barbarian, this was because to some extent the grandeur *was* barbaric, and also because the conditions of his own culture were such as to make the barbarism seem greater. By nature, and still more by education, he was unfitted for the large appreciation of a genius so various ;—an appreciation found only in exquisitely poetic minds, and in those whose culture has been refined by the teaching of poetic minds. Indeed Shakspeare is so abundant in excellences and defects, so many-sided, that few critics in their private convictions believe any one else sees all that they see ; and Voltaire was shut out from seeing many things, or saw them in a false light, by a preoccupation with other ideals. He could not consider Corneille and Racine models of art without to some extent depreciating Shakspeare. Nevertheless, as a man of sensibility and keen insight, he could not fail to be affected by works of real poetic worth ; and his insight was sharpened by that initiation into the secrets of the art which generally comes with the practice of an art. To have written dramas is a great preparation for the subtle appreciation of dramas. Critics in general do not understand this. They cannot recognize their own deficiencies. They will sometimes (not always) admit that unless a man has studied the means and methods of painting, he is an imperfect judge of pictures ; but they will not admit that one who has never studied the mechanism of a drama is an imperfect judge of dramas. Voltaire had studied the dramatic art : but if his study was an aid it was also an obstacle in judging a form of art widely different from that which he thought the best. There is truth in Johnson's remark,—“Sir, the poetry which a man deliberately sits down to write, that, and that only, will he praise ;” but it must be accepted with qualification. If Voltaire thought the drama of Corneille and Racine not only exquisite, but, with some minor modifications, the best adapted to his nation—and how could he think otherwise when he saw the nation idolizing these poets ?—it is clear that he must have rejected the drama of Shakspeare as a form of art incompatible with the French ideal. The two dramas had different aims and different methods ; they had, consequently, different merits and different defects. Voltaire failed to understand Shakspeare. Shakspeare would not less have misunderstood Voltaire.

We laugh at the French for their misapprehensions of our drama, and

despise the short-sighted pedantry which prevents their enjoying excellences so unanimously enjoyed by us that we think all rightly-constituted minds must delight in them. Yet we have no misgivings when we find ourselves totally insensible to excellences which charm the whole French nation. We assume that *their* insensibility comes from narrowness of mind, *our* insensibility from superior culture.

The drama has an immediate and an ulterior aim. Its immediate aim is to delight an audience; its ulterior aim is the ennobling and enlarging of the mind through the sympathies — $\pi\alpha\thetaημάτων$ κάθαρσις. There are obviously many methods of delighting an audience, from the most delicate refinements of intellectual gratification, down to the coarsest appeals to the passions and the senses. The artist chooses his means according to the impulses of his own genius, and adapts them to his audience; the critic judges whether the means chosen are rightly chosen.

Such being the aim of the dramatist, a little reflection will assure us that over and above the general conditions to which all poetry must conform, the drama as a special art must be under special conditions. These are of two kinds: first, the technical exigencies and capacities of the stage—*i. e.* the theatrical conditions, which determine what *can* and *must* be done for due realization of the poet's intentions; and secondly, the emotional exigencies and capacities of the audience—*i. e.* the psychological conditions—which guide the dramatist in his selection of means whereby the sympathies are to be moved. A detail may be exquisitely poetical, yet be a defect if impracticable or ineffective in stage representation, or if it lie beyond the apprehension and sympathy of the audience. A passage may be poetical or thoughtful, yet be quite unfit for the drama, either because it retards the culmination of emotion, or because it is too remote for immediate apprehension.

Writers on the drama rarely possess the technical and special psychological knowledge indispensable to fine criticism. Their observations, for the most part, turn upon the general conditions, not on the special conditions, and are, consequently, on a par with those made about pictures by amateurs unacquainted with the laws of perspective, composition, and colour—insensible to the exigencies and limits of the art. Their criticisms may be valuable and suggestive in elucidating questions of literature, but the drama, as a special form of literature, requires a more technical estimate.

The French and English drama are very much alike in all their lower forms of melodrama, farce and spectacle, which appeal to mixed audiences, for the most part little cultivated, and but slightly susceptible to the more refined delicacies of art. But in their higher forms of tragedy and comedy they are extremely unlike; the one appealing to a section of the public, and that section classical in its training; the other appealing to all classes, and endeavouring to satisfy the various demands of all classes. The one repudiates an effect gained at the expense of art; the other is careless of art which does not produce a powerful effect. The French critic is

annoyed by a solecism in language; the English critic, though grateful for every beauty of diction, thinks a great deal more of a "point" or a "situation." A Frenchman is in raptures with the sober elegance, and discreet power of a work wherein nothing is forced beyond the accepted limits of good taste; an Englishman regards this sobriety as feebleness, and this discreetness as coldness, inevitably productive of *ennui*. The French drama differs from the English drama in the conduct of its action, in the selection and exhibition of character, and in its diction. A critic may prefer one to the other, as a peach may be preferred to a pineapple; but one can never become the standard by which to judge the other.

It was Voltaire's error to have judged Shakspeare by the French standard, as it is our error to judge Corneille and Racine by the Shakspearian standard. When Voltaire came to England, he saw *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Julius Caesar* performed; he was affected and offended by them: he felt their terrible power, and disapproved their vehemence and licence. His taste was offended. While his emotions were thrilled with their passionate scenes, and his soul stirred by their great characters, he was constantly annoyed by their many departures from what he had been trained to consider as the true principles of art. He saw, as a dramatist, that the French ideal might enlarge its limits to include many sources of aesthetic delight which it had rejected; but he also saw that the English ideal was not one which could serve as a model for France. In the interest of his own works he pleaded for greater liberty, and cited the English drama in justification of the plea. "France is not the only country which has tragedies," he wrote in 1735, "and our taste, or rather our custom of bringing nothing on the stage but long conversations on love does not delight other nations. In general, our stage is devoid of action and deficient in subjects of exalted interest. The presence on the stage of our *petits maîtres* interferes with the action; and exalted subjects are banished because our nation dares not think on them. Had you seen the *Julius Caesar* of Shakspeare played as I have seen it, and pretty nearly as I have translated it, our declarations of love and our confidants would seem miserable in comparison." As a dramatist he rebelled against the pedantry of critics, who were *not* dramatists, and who in France exercised such despotic power, that Corneille, even *after* his great success, declared that he "would be the first to condemn the *Cid* if it sinned against the great and sovereign maxims of Aristotle." But Voltaire in pleading for liberty was firm against licence. He struggled against the restrictions which prevented the free movement of his invention; but the rules which he would fain have loosened he had no thought of flinging away. His imitations of Shakspeare were attempts to incorporate with the style of his native drama certain elements which he admired; but from first to last he thought the style of Shakspeare barbarous, and preferred that of Addison's *Cato*, which had "*des vers dignes de Virgile et des sentiments dignes de Cato!*" In a letter written two days before the one we quoted just now, he speaks of Shakspeare as an English Corneille, but adds, "*grand feu*

d'ailleurs, et ressemblant plus à Gilles qu'à Corneille ; mais il a des morceaux admirables." In the remonstrance which he addressed to the French Academy, calling on it to protest against principles which threatened the supremacy of Corneille, he writes angrily, and sometimes absurdly, but his point of view is consistent. The indecent and trivial expressions, and the anachronisms which he notices in Shakspeare, were grave offences in the eyes of Frenchmen.

The broad contrast of the two forms of art is visible in this sentence : "A Scotch judge," he says, "who has published *Elements of Criticism* in three volumes, in which there are some delicate and judicious reflections, has nevertheless been unfortunate enough to compare the first scene of that monstrosity *Hamlet* with the first scene of that chef-d'œuvre *Iphigénie*. He affirms that the beautiful verses of Arcas are not worth the reply of the sentinel : 'there's not a mouse stirring.' Yes, a soldier may, indeed, reply thus, *in the guard-room* ; *but not on the stage*, before the highest persons in the kingdom, who express themselves with refinement, and *before whom we must express ourselves in the same style.*" A drama written for a court and a classical public, had to adapt itself to the tastes and prejudices of that public—these were psychological conditions ; and Voltaire was right in asking the Academy, which represented authority, "whether the nation which has produced *Iphigénie* and *Athalie*, ought to abandon them for men strangling women on the stage, for porters, for witches, buffoons and drunken priests ? whether our court, so long renowned for its *politesse* and taste, ought to be converted into an alehouse ? and whether the palace of a virtuous sovereign ought to be a place for prostitution ?" Few Englishmen will doubt that *Hamlet* is incomparably greater as a poem and as a play than *Iphigénie* ; but, perhaps, few Englishmen are in a condition to appreciate *Iphigénie*, and still fewer have been from youth upwards trained to look upon dramatic art so as to feel the force of Voltaire's irony, when he says after a sketch of *Hamlet*, "We cannot have a more forcible example of the difference of taste among nations. How shall we speak after this of the rules of Aristotle and the three unities, and *les bienséances*, and the necessity of never leaving the scene empty, and that no person should go on or off without an apparent motive ? How talk after this of the artful arrangement of plot and its natural development ? of the language being simple and noble ? of making princes speak with the propriety which they have or ought to have ? of never violating the rules of language ?"

In this matter of language alone, the psychological conditions of the two nations are widely opposed. The French are exclusive even to the point of pedantry ; the English are daring to laxity. An energetic expression, a forcible image, delights us, shocks them. We cannot realize to ourselves what it is which offends Voltaire in Hamlet's mention of his mother's shoes. The familiarity is a beauty to us, because it has a vividness which intensifies the pathos. In like manner, the "itching palm" of Cassius seems to us an admirable expression ; to Voltaire it seems ignoble.

How could the Academy, jealous in all matters of language, tolerate such a passage as—

What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion
Make yourselves scabs?

If we suffer it to pass, it is in favour of its energy, our admiration of energy in all things exceeding our admiration of elegance. But it must be confessed that Shakspeare often carries this national characteristic to extremes, and that among his not unfrequent hyperboles there is the hyperbole of brutality. It requires a taste accustomed to robust food not to demur to the excess of energy in such passages as—

All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome! you herd of— Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred
Farther than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile!

It is requisite to bear in mind the differences of national taste in considering Voltaire's criticisms on Shakspeare, and we shall then see that his estimate was by no means so superficial and absurd as it is usually called. In writing to Horace Walpole in old age he defends himself against the reproof of despising Shakspeare:—"I said, it is true, long ago, that if he had lived in the days of Addison he would have added to his genius that elegance and purity which make Addison admirable. I said that his genius was his own; his faults those of his age. In my opinion he is precisely like Lopé de Vega and Calderon. *His genius is fine, but uncultivated; there is no regularity, no bienséance, no art; he minglest grandeur with vulgarity, sublimity with buffoonery; he is the chaos of tragedy, in which there are a hundred gleams of light.*"

Idolators affirm that Shakspeare was a consummate artist; they will not admit that he had faults. Voltaire may be excused for not being of this faith. And if we, surveying the dispute from higher ground, see that many of his criticisms are inadmissible, because they spring from principles which are inapplicable, we must, nevertheless, admit that, from his point of view, they were perfectly justified. Let us glance at the current of French opinion from the date of Voltaire's first mention of Shakspeare.

The introduction of the English poet was rapidly followed by an admiration which formed part of the then growing Anglomania. In 1769 the Théâtre Français—that temple of the classic stage—produced, and with great success, *Hamlet*, by Ducis. Probably but few of our readers have more than a second-hand acquaintance with this famous attempt to adapt Shakspeare to the French taste without any sacrifice of that taste. Ducis has been ridiculed and despised, not only in England and Germany, but also in France, by partisans of the *école romantique*. The ridicule is cheap ridicule; the contempt springs from ignorance. The *Hamlet* and *Othello* of Ducis may excite amusement if considered as reproductions or representa-

tions of Shakspeare; but they were not meant to be so considered. They are French tragedies, for which Shakspeare supplied the elements. This is obvious from the opening scene. Perhaps in the whole range of the drama there is no finer exposition than the first act of *Hamlet*; but such an exposition would be impossible in the French style. Accordingly, Ducis opens with the entrance of Claudius, who says to Polonius,—

Oui, cher Polonius, tout mon parti n'aspire,
En détrônant Hamlet, qu'à m'assurer l'empire.
Ce prince, seul, farouche, à ses langueurs livré,
Aime à nourrir le fiel dont il est dévoré, &c.

We need not continue. Polonius is no longer the servile courtier we know, but an insipid confidant. He advises Claudius to beware of Hamlet—

Je connais trop cette âme et profonde et sensible;
Il cache un cœur de feu sous un dehors paisible.

Gertrude is repentant, and will not hear of Hamlet being dethroned, but urges Claudius to prove the sincerity of his remorse by espousing the cause of the son, whose father he murdered. And this is the whole of the first act—by no means a feeble act on the French system, but in striking contrast to the original, so tumultuous with various emotion.

In the second act Gertrude narrates to her confidant the story of her guilt. So little has the original been followed that the Ghost never once appears. Horatio (called Norceste) is told of Hamlet's approach, whose wild manner is described. Presently Hamlet is heard without, exclaiming,—

Fuis, spectre épouvantable!
Porte au fond des tombeaux ton aspect redoutable.

We have heard that Talma's entrance at this point produced a thrilling effect, his haggard look and agitated tones greatly moving the audience as he exclaimed,—

Eh quoi! vous ne le voyez pas?
Il vole sur ma tête, il s'attache à mes pas!
Je me meurs.

NORCESTE.

Revenez d'une erreur si funeste:
Ouvrez les yeux, seigneur, reconnaissiez Norceste, &c.

Hamlet then tells Norceste that he has twice in his sleep seen his father, who has revealed the crime of Claudius. Instead of the play to catch the conscience of the king, he proposes to narrate the story of the King of England, and thus,—

Emprunte à mes soupçons des rapports et des traits,
Qui contraignent leurs fronts à trahir leurs forfaits.

The Hamlet of Ducis is certainly not Shakespearian; nevertheless it is a good French play, and obtained unusual success. Other imitations followed, but all of them in the same style. Nor can this be surprising to any one who considers the temper of a French public, and the imperative necessity

laid upon a dramatist to adapt himself to the mental condition of his audience. The effect on an audience being instantaneous, with no time allowed for the correction of a first impression, the dramatist can rely on no reversal of any misapprehension by a calmer judgment. A reader may be startled, offended, puzzled; he may throw down the volume in disgust, or pause in his progress to reconsider first impressions; the poem remains quietly awaiting his maturer verdict; and if it remains to the last unappreciated by him, it wins the applause of other and better prepared readers. Not so the theatrical spectator; he must be conquered at once. If his first impression is unfavourable he will yawn, or hiss. There is no breathing-time allowed for his panting impatience. Nay, even should he have been delighted with the four first acts, an unfortunate fifth act will draw down his condemnation of the whole. Such being the perils inevitable in representation, we may forgive the dramatist if he seem over-cautious in trying experiments on the public taste; and we may thus understand why Ducis was afraid to exhibit Iago's villainy in the progress of the action, and had recourse to the safer, though feebler, expedient of *unmasking* him at the close. It was not that Ducis was insensible to the dramatic vigour of Shakspeare's Iago; he declares in his preface, that it is drawn with extraordinary force. "Avec quelle souplesse effrayante, sous combien de formes trompeuses, ce serpent caresse et séduit le généreux et trop confiant Othello!" But this admiration was no assurance that a French public would tolerate such a character. "I am firmly persuaded," he says, "that if the English can tranquilly witness the machinations of this monster, the French would never for a moment suffer his presence on the stage, much less allow him to exhibit all the depth and extent of his villainy." The dramatists of our day have shown that a Parisian audience can tolerate and applaud characters far surpassing Iago in crime and perversity; but when Ducis wrote, the sensibilities of the public were more delicate, as we may gather not only from his caution, but from the extraordinary effect produced by the dénouement of *Othello*. "Never," he says, "was there a more terrible impression. The whole audience rose, and gave vent to a cry of anguish: several women fainted." We take these things more quietly in England.

Was the timidity of Ducis excessive? It is difficult to say; all we know is, that fifty years afterwards, and when the French stage had undergone profound modifications, when the rebellion of the Romanticists and the drama of Dumas had tried and modified the temper of audiences, Alfred de Vigny produced his version of *Othello*, and we learn from an article written at the time by the Duc de Broglie, and reprinted in Guizot's work on Shakspeare, that the character of Iago was only saved from condemnation by the excellence of the actor. "A la scène il nous a paru déplaire généralement; déplaire d'une manière très-prononcée et qui allait croissant d'acte en acte." The grounds of the disapprobation were various; but the general opinions seemed to be that Iago was too wicked.

The success of Ducis naturally stimulated cultivated Frenchmen to become better acquainted with Shakspeare. Voltaire became alarmed for *le bon goût*, which was thus threatened. Signs of the coming revolution everywhere multiplied. Mercier had by precept and example openly attacked the classic drama. *Werther* was agitating France, as it had agitated all Europe. And to crown all, a translation of Shakspeare was announced by Letourneur, to which even royal personages had subscribed. This was touching Voltaire in a tender place: as a man of taste he was irritated by what he could only regard in the light of a dangerous heresy; as a dramatist he was threatened by onslaughts on the very system to which he owed his glory. His anger breaks out in ridiculous vehemence. He calls Letourneur "*un misérable*," "*un impudent imbécile*," and even "*un faquin*." His correspondence, always piquant and amusing, becomes especially amusing whenever Shakspeare or Letourneur is mentioned. "Have you read the two volumes by that creature" [the creature is the translator], "in which he wishes us to accept Shakspeare as the sole model of true tragedy? He calls him the god of the stage!" To Voltaire, who had private views as to one Arouet's claim to be the true model of tragedy, this was certainly irritating; his ill-humour betrays itself in the next sentence. "To his idol he sacrifices all the French without exception" [not even excepting Arouet!], "as in days of yore they sacrificed pigs to Ceres!" He appeals to the patriotism of his correspondent: "Do you not feel intense hate towards this impudent idiot? Will you sit down under such *an affront to France*?" And then remorse comes over him: "The horrible part of it is that the monster has followers in France; and as the crown of this calamity and horror, I it was who first mentioned Shakspeare; I it was who showed France the pearls I had found on this enormous dungheap. Little did I think that I should one day help to trample on the crowns of Racine and Corneille, and to ornament with them the brows of a barbarian player." We have already expounded what were Voltaire's real opinions respecting Shakspeare, and may therefore continue to quote these sallies of wrath without leading to a misconception. "The abomination of desecration is in the Temple," he writes. "Lekain, who is as angry as you are, tells me that almost all the young men in Paris are for Letourneur. I have seen the end of the reign of reason and good taste. I shall die, leaving France barbarian."

Those who remember the language in which Goethe, Kant, and "the Germans" were spoken of not long ago by many English writers, who looked upon the introduction of German literature as a new irruption of barbarians, will not be surprised at Voltaire's anger. After hearing Goethe's "drivel," "sickly sentimentalism," "sensuality," and "immorality," proclaimed by guardians of "manly English taste;" after learning from the highest authorities that the author of *Wilhelm Meister* was "not a gentleman," and that Kant was a "dreamer" and an "atheist," we may with tolerable patience hear Voltaire's declaration that Shakspeare was a "miserable ape" and a "drunkard." He went so far in his anger

as to say, "It is impossible that any man not absolutely mad could in cool judgment prefer such a *Gilles* as Shakspeare to Corneille and Racine. Such an infamous opinion could only spring from sordid avarice, eager for *subscriptions*."

The coming revolution could not be arrested by sarcasms. German and English literature slowly penetrated France, and slowly modified French taste. The very fierceness of the opposition kept alive the public interest. La Harpe could speak of Kant and Swedenborg as minds of the same class, "the opprobrium of human intellect" (*l'opprobre de l'esprit humain*), and Chénier could say of Goethe, "All that can be mentioned in his praise is—that he ventured to imitate Racine and Voltaire; which for a German is saying much." Judgments like these are quickly reversed. Curious minds were not to be withheld from inquiring into the actual merits of Shakspeare and Goethe; and it was easy for them to show France that the conservative critics were utterly ignorant of the writers they condemned. Slowly but steadily French culture widened; and now every one admits that in the drama, as in all other arts, widely differing forms may be equally admirable, and that a Gothic cathedral may fitly rival a Greek temple.

The gravest and most authoritative expression of the change in public opinion respecting Shakspeare is to be read in Guizot's remarkable "Life," prefixed in 1821 to a revised edition of Letourneur's translation, and since republished in a separate volume. He tells us that there was a time when Voltaire's praise of Shakspeare was considered excessive, and men "refused to profane the words genius and glory by applying them to works so barbarous;" but that now-a-days "there is no longer any question about the genius and the glory, which are uncontested, the only dispute is whether Shakspeare's system is better than Voltaire's." In his general remarks on this subject Guizot writes like a philosopher who has meditated seriously, and he frequently expresses, with the luminous precision which belongs to him, the results of modern criticism. But it is the philosopher, not the dramatic critic, that we listen to. On all points specially affecting the drama as an art, distinguishable from the drama as literature, he speaks with the vagueness, and sometimes with the unapprehensiveness inevitable in one treating of an art which he has not himself practised, or studied as an art. He observes, on the general question, that "if the Romantic system (in which the English drama is included) has its beauties, it has necessarily its art and its rules. Everything which men acknowledge as beautiful in art, owes its effect to certain combinations, of which our reason can detect the secret when our emotions have attested its power. The science, or the employment of these combinations, constitutes what we call art. Shakspeare had his own. We must detect it in his works, and examine the means he employs, and the results he aims at." Admirably said; unhappily M. Guizot was not sufficiently familiar with the exigencies and powers of dramatic combinations to detect this secret. He remarks that Shakspeare "excels in the subject-

matter, but sins in the form; he places with great vigour on the stage the instincts, passions, ideas, the whole inward life of men, and is the profoundest and most dramatic of moralists; but he makes his persons speak a language often strange, far-fetched, excessive, wanting in sobriety and nature." This is the kind of criticism which, whether correct or incorrect, lends no illumination to dramatic art; and it is the kind of criticism which passes generally current, taking the shape of vague eulogy and vague blame, instead of direct analysis of the poet's *means* in reference to his *aims*.

Shakspeare-idolators will find no want of cordial admiration in Guizot's pages. He has been profoundly impressed with the greatness and prodigality of the poet's genius, and expresses himself mildly and modestly on such defects as force themselves on his notice. Like most writers on this theme, he sees in all defects only the excesses of a merit. "Un malheur est arrivé à Shakspeare; prodigue de ses richesses, il n'a pas toujours su les distribuer à propos ni avec art." It is the crowding of tumultuous ideas which confuse him, and "he has not the courage to treat them with a prudent severity." This is true of many defective passages, but there are many more which carry with them no such glorious excuse. That Guizot should offer such an excuse, and at the same time assign it as the excuse for errors in Corneille, is significant of the change which had come over the condition of criticism in France since the days of Voltaire, when the defects of Shakspeare were regarded as evidences of a rude and barbarous state of art.

The date of Guizot's work is 1821. About the same time, M. de Barante published his critique on *Hamlet* (reprinted in his *Mélanges*), and adopted a more decidedly partisan tone. Significant as an historical indication, this essay has little merit in itself. It wants the integrity and candour which ought to preside over criticism. Surely the greatness of Shakspeare may dispense with sophistical eulogies? The admirer of Wilkes was not content with insisting on Wilkes's talents, but loudly affirmed that he did not squint more than a gentleman *ought* to squint. The admirers of Shakspeare are apt to display the same incoherent fervour; and after taxing their ingenuity to discover merit in details which offend all unprejudiced minds, they proceed to condemn similar or lesser faults in other writers with merciless severity. Shakspeare does not lose his rank as the greatest of poets because we find him sometimes erring like the smallest. But the genuineness of our admiration of his greatness becomes suspicious, when accompanied by an insensibility to his glaring defects. The *dénouement* of *Hamlet*, for example, may be quietly noticed as defective, without disturbing our sense of the singular power of that tragedy; but it is an insult to our understanding to hear it defended on the metaphysical grounds proposed by M. de Barante:— "Il était difficile de le dénouer puisqu'il n'avait pas de nœud, et que l'action marchait comme au hasard. Le doute a présidé à tout son ensemble, et pèse encore sur le dénouement." This is what passes, in

some circles, as profound criticism, "philosophical" criticism. It is assuredly not dramatic criticism.

In 1827, Villemain published his essay on Shakspeare. He keeps honestly aloof from nonsense and declamation. Although finely praising the genius, he is also found candidly admitting defects. "All the absurd improbabilities," he says, "all the buffooneries of which Shakspeare is so lavish, were common to the rude theatre which we possessed at the same era; it was the mark of the times; why should we now admire in Shakspeare the defects which are everywhere else buried in oblivion, and which have survived in the English poet only on account of the sublime traits of genius with which he has surrounded them?" He calls upon his countrymen to admire and enjoy the works without falling into the error of erecting them as models to be imitated by other dramatists. "Copied upon system," he says, "or timidly corrected, Shakspeare is worthless to imitators; when even in the energetic hands of Ducis he is reduced to the classical proportions and confined by the restrictions of our stage, he loses the liberty of his movement and all that is great and unexpected. The gigantic characters he invents have no longer room to move. His actions of terror, his large developments of passion, cannot be reduced within our limits. Do not restrain this giant in swaddling-clothes. Leave him his savage liberty. Do not clip this noble and redundant foliage as you clip the trees at Versailles." In these remarks, Villemain was tacitly reproving the Romantic school; nor was his sagacity wholly at fault in its estimation of French feeling, when he said that "Shakspeare belonged to England and ought to remain there." The temporary successes of the Romantic school may have seemed to prove him in error; but, as before stated, Shakspeare is still without a home on the French stage. Of Villemain, as of Guizot, it must be said that the absence of an intimate acquaintance with the *art*, renders his criticisms acceptable only in the light of literary judgments. In this respect, they are often excellent. Very well worth reading also are his remarks in the *Cours de Littérature*, in which he contrasts Voltaire with Shakspeare, pointing out not only the superiority of the English poet in depth and truth of passion, but even in *bon goût*.

In spite of the eulogies of eminent and authoritative writers, aided by the more passionate advocacy of the Romanticists, Shakspeare was still excluded from the French stage. At length, in 1829, Alfred de Vigny ventured on the production of *Othello*. The interesting point in this experiment is not that it succeeded, but that its success was without results. Helped by the talents of Talma and Mdlle. Mars, it was played sixty nights. It has rarely, if ever, been reproduced. It led to no similar experiment with *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*. This fact opens a large question for the meditations of a dramatic student; we cannot dwell upon it here.

Since 1829, the triumph of the revolutionary principles, and the noisy but vanishing successes of the Romantic school, have quite destroyed the

prejudices which for so long aided in excluding Shakspeare from France. There still, however, remain certain obstacles to his naturalization, especially on the stage. Two of these we may briefly mention. Without their poetry, the plays sink to the level of *drames*, and, as *drames*, most of them are surpassed in interest and construction by more modern works. In estimating the value of the one or two attempts which have been made since that of Alfred de Vigny, to present Shakspeare before the French public, we should remember the difficulties of the translators and the inevitable disappointment of the public. Imagine *Faust* played to an English audience in an English version, and ask what would be the unbiassed judgment of a public which fancied itself listening to the greatest poem of modern times? Some such result necessarily follows when Shakspeare's large and magnificent style is reproduced in the meagre diction and artificial rhythm of French Alexandrines.

M. Emile Deschamps produced a version of *Macbeth* in 1848. It was a work of talent and great pains; but a passage or two will suffice to show that the French public listened to language very unlike the original.

I have almost forgot the taste of fears;
 The time has been my senses would have cooled
 To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
 Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir .
 As life were in't. I have supped full of horrors.
 Direness, familiar to my slaught'rous thoughts,
 Cannot once start me.

Does any one suppose that the sensibilities of an audience could be equally roused by a version like the following?—

Ah! j'ai presque oublié ce que c'est que la crainte.
 Eh bien! j'ai vu le temps où, d'une terreur sainte,
 Mon cœur se fut glacé par des cris dans la nuit,
 Ou si de quelque meurtre on répandait le bruit,
 Mes cheveux sur mon front se dressaient d'épouante,
 Et s'agitaient, ainsi qu'une forêt vivante!
 Maintenant, les horreurs, les fléaux, par milliers
 Fondent sur mon chemin, avec moi familiers,
 Et je me marche entouré comme de mon escorte.

One cannot deny that, considered as a translation, this is cleverly executed; nor can one deny that in translation all that is exquisite in the original disappears. Again, the touching and Shakspearian lines—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
 To the last syllable of recorded time;
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

There is no one who has heard these lines, even when mouthed in a barn, but will remember their effect upon his mind; let him endeavour to estimate a Frenchman's emotion on hearing these:—

Ainsi demain, demain encore, puis un autre
 S'avancent vers le gouffre; et tous nos jours passés
 N'auront fait qu'éclairer de tristes insensés
 Sur la route qui mène où tout s'abîme ensemble!
 Ah! la vie est une ombre errante!—elle ressemble
 Au pauvre comédien qu'on voit gesticuler,
 Crier une heure . . . et dont on n'entend plus parler!

It is unnecessary to multiply examples—the reader sees at once that such presentations of a poet must inevitably be disappointing; and they enable us to understand one of the causes why Shakspeare has failed to secure a permanent place in the French repertory. A precisely similar cause excludes Molière from the English stage. There is no one competent to form an opinion who does not recognize the exquisite genius of Molière and the unsurpassed art which his masterpieces display; yet the impossibility of adequately presenting them in English, shuts them from our stage repertory.

Considering that none of Shakspeare's plays are acted as he wrote them, and that it is only of late years that we have rejected the manipulations of Garrick and Cibber, it would ill become us to upbraid the French for their alterations and improvements, singular as these may sometimes appear. It is certain that Shakspeare's arrangement is often defective; and yet those who undertake to improve it make sad bungles. Goethe's alterations of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Schiller's of *Macbeth*, are surprising instances of such failure. What shall we say to M. Deschamps when he improves the *dénouement* of *Macbeth* by making Macbeth and Macduff both fall mortally wounded, and conclude the scene thus?—

MACDUFF, montrant Macbeth à Malcolm.

Je meurs . . . il va mourir; salut, roi! car vous l'êtes!

La paix enfin juillit du choc des deux athlètes . . .

Mes fils, je vous rejoins!

[*Il expire.*]

MALCOLM, penché sur son corps.

Ah! j'en jure par toi,
 L'Ecosse renaitra, libre enfin, sous son roi!

[*De sombres nuages ont couvert l'horizon, et les sorcières apparaissent sur les rochers de la citadelle, des torches à la main*]

MACBETH, se soulevant un peu avant de mourir.

Malcolm, tu vas régner! c'est juste! mais regarde!
 Oui! voilà les trois scours qui m'ont perdu. Prends garde
 À leurs conseils manditaires et songe à mon adieu!

[*Il meurt. Eclat de rires des sorcières.*]

MALCOLM.

Amis, vive l'Ecosse, et ne croyons qu'en Dieu!

This was greatly admired by many critics, and it certainly gives a symmetry to the construction, besides "pointing a moral;" but in England we are not likely to accept it as a poetic improvement. Shakespeare, we think, knew best how to deal with his supernatural agencies; and it would probably never have occurred to him to make his witches stultify themselves by so gratuitous an exhibition of the evil results of following their inspirations.

Still more astonishing are the improvements upon which Alexandre Dumas ventured in his version of *Hamlet*. Of the poverty and commonplace of his translation we say nothing, but his alteration of the *dénouement* calls for remark, because it was loudly applauded by many journalists as being "so logical." Shakspeare's *dénouement* is bad enough, one must confess—so bad as to justify even a reverent hand in rearranging it; but there is at any rate no glaring inconsistency between it and all that has preceded it; whereas in the "logical" arrangement of Dumas the whole piece is rendered inconsistent. Instead of killing Laertes in the duel, and then the King, Hamlet calls upon the Ghost, whom he exhibits to their guilty gaze. Laertes appeals to the Ghost for pardon.

L'OMBRE.

Oni, ton sang trop prompt t'entraîna vers l'abîme,
Laërte, et le seigneur t'a puni pour ton crime ;
Mais tu le trouveras, car il sonde les cœurs,
Moins sévère là haut. Laërte, prie, et meurs.

[*Laërte meurt.*

The Queen implores pardon, and the Ghost—a truly French ghost of the nineteenth century—tells her, that her crime, having been dictated by love, will be pardoned :

Va, ton cœur a lavé ta honte avec tes pleurs,
Femme ici, reine au ciel, Gertrude, espère et meurs. [*Gertrude meurt.*

LE ROI.

Pardon !

L'OMBRE.

Pas de pardon ! va, meurtrier infame,
Va, pour ton crime affreux, dans leurs cercles de flamme.
Satan et les enfers n'ont pas trop de douleurs ;
Va, traître incestueux, va, desespère et meurs.

[*Le Roi meurt.*

Love, it seems, is an excuse in a woman, but not in the man who is her accomplice. Waiving that, let us ask how it is that the Ghost, thus shown to be capable of breathing away the souls of Laertes, the King, and Queen, assuring each of the awaiting judgment, has all through the piece been condemned to wander nightly in great perturbation because his murder was unavenged ? Why did he goad on his sceptical son to avenge him when he could have so easily avenged himself ?

If we are to be "*logique*," such questions must arise. Dumas has,

however, a higher logic; and having taken Shakspeare in hand, shows us how this logic improves the *dénouement*. Hamlet left thus alone with his father's ghost, asks him:—

Et moi, vnis-je rester, triste orphelin sur terre
A respirer cet air imprégné de misère ?
Tragédien choisi par le courroux de Dieu,
Si j'ai mal pris mon rôle et mal saisi mon jeu ;
Si tremblant de mon œuvre et lasse sans combattre
Pour un que tu voulais j'en ai fait mourir quatre,
O ! parle, est-ce que Dieu ne pardonnera pas,
Père, et quel châtiment m'attend donc ?

L'OMBRE.

Tu vivras

This is the sort of epigram to throw some men into ecstasies. Its quality as a Shakspearian trait we need not criticize.

The question more or less confusedly originated by Voltaire,—How far is Shakspeare acceptable as a model of dramatic art?—still remains unanswered by France very much in the sense of Voltaire. A century of discussion and of change has enlarged the ideal of art, and has broken down the pedantic barriers which confined the poet's movement within narrow limits; Aristotle and the “rules” are no longer despotic; consequently we now see the operation of deeper and more permanent causes. If France has not naturalized Shakspeare, it is not from prejudice and pedantry, but from reasons similar to those which prevent Molière, Racine, Corneille, Goethe, Schiller, Calderon, and Alfieri, from becoming naturalized in England. Observe, however, that just as Goethe is studied in England, Shakspeare is studied in France: studied, but not acted; accepted as a poet, not as a dramatist.

To aid in the more general diffusion of this study, and to place a large amount of Shakspearian literature within easy access for the French public, comes the translation by François Victor Hugo, begun in 1859 and already in its twelfth volume. A more creditable undertaking has seldom been carried out with equal success. There are many faults to find in the execution, but we cordially and gratefully acknowledge the talent and the pains bestowed on it. Not content with giving a line-for-line translation in prose with all the fidelity which the disparity of the two languages admitted, M. François Hugo has helped the student by translating from chronicles, stories, and poems, all those passages which Shakspeare is known or supposed to have used as his sources. He has also added long historical and critical introductions to the plays. We know not what French readers may say to these; in our country they will be regarded as somewhat too journalistic for so grave a work. When M. Hugo gives *in extenso* a translation of the first *Hamlet* as well as the second and matured play, or when he translates the novels of Cinthio and Bandello, from which Shakspeare drew his plots, real aid is given to the student. But when he writes an ambitious essay on the “conceptions of

the invisible" which were general in Shakspeare's day, and stranslate Shelley's *Queen Mab* to illustrate it, one feels that the picture would have been better had the painter taken less pains. Throughout this otherwise praiseworthy undertaking there is too conspicuous an attempt to make "le grand Will" a peg whereon to hang rags of rhetoric and historical surveys. We will cite but one example. He tells us that the baptismal register of Stratford-on-Aven bears the name of Shakspeare's son, and that is the strange name of Hamlet. "Must we see in this choice," he asks, "a proof of the admiration which Shakspeare, deeply moved by the narrative of Belleforest, already felt for the future hero of his drama? or must we suppose that in placing his child under the invocation of the Danish Brutus (*sous l'invocation du Brutus danois*) William had a still more tragic thought? Oppressed by his own misery and the misery of his family, crushed beneath the weight of social tyranny, sick of existence, thinking perhaps of suicide, did William wish by this baptism to bequeath to the son that should survive him a sort of mission of vengeance? These are questions which escape human research, and of which the immortal soul of the poet has carried away the secret." *Risum teneatis amici?* Such a passage is typical. When we know that the writer is the son of Victor Hugo, we recognize in it the son of his father. The amusing part of the nonsense is that this tirade is founded on an initial carelessness. Shakspeare did *not* christen his son "Hamlet," but "Hamnet," which was the name of the child's god-father. Rhetoric cannot attend to the fastidious demands of accuracy; but an editor of Shakspeare might look twice at a name before speculating on its significance.

Of M. François Hugo's translation, only Frenchmen well acquainted with English poetry can fitly judge. An Englishman may recognize its general fidelity, but he cannot decide on its felicity; he cannot appreciate how far the magic of style reappears in the translation. For example, the beautiful and simple words—

In such a night as this
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise—

are correctly translated by, "Dans une nuit parcielle à celle-ci, tandis que le suave zéphyr baisait doucement les arbres sans qu'ils fissent du bruit;" but are they adequately represented in this version? and can French prose come nearer? These questions few Englishmen will venture to answer. We, certainly, shall not attempt it. It is enough for us to remark that, wherever we have compared the original with the translation, we have found M. Hugo displaying a rare mastery and a scrupulous accuracy.

The publishers of this translation announced, as a great attraction, that it would be introduced by a volume written by the translator's celebrated father. "The author of *Hamlet* commented on by the author of

Ruy Blas" might indeed be reckoned as an attraction. The bulky volume, *William Shakspeare, par Victor Hugo*, has not, however, brought much illumination either to dramatic literature or to the state of opinion in France. It is an immense rhapsody, for which the English poet is merely a pretext. As a rhapsody, it has a certain grandiose eloquence, but we are forced to add that it contains little thought and much grandiose nonsense. As a display of intellectual fireworks it is prodigious. But after the eye has been dazzled with the rushing, leaping, sputtering fire of its imagery, epigram, paradox, and declamation, the understanding recognizes little but clouds of smoke and bits of dirty paper. Lovers of fine phrases, and admirers of the "big brush" may be delighted with its abundant and often felicitous imagery, its unexpected combinations, and its sham sublimities. But thoughtful readers will turn impatiently away from its emptiness and bombast; critical students of Shakspeare will be amazed at its carelessness and ignorance. Every now and then impatience is checked by meeting with a description or an image which reminds us that it is a man of genius who is speaking. For example, how grandly he says of Aeschylus that he has "jusqu'aux épaules la cendre des siècles, il n'a que la tête hors de cet ensouissement, et, comme ce colosse des solitudes, avec sa tête seule, il est aussi grand que tous les dieux voisins debout sur leurs piédestaux." This is a poem in four lines. Though not irreproachable, the passage on Job is also poetic:—"Job commence le drame, et il y a quarante siècles de cela, par la nuit en présence de Jéhovah et de Satan ; le mal défie le bien, et voilà l'action engagée. La terre est le lieu de la scène, et l'homme est le champ de bataille ; les fléaux sont les personnages. Une des plus sauvages grandeurs de ce poème, c'est que le soleil y est sinistre." [This is the Hugo sublime.] "Le soleil est dans Job comme dans Homère, mais ce n'est plus l'aube, c'est le midi. Le lugubre accablement du rayon d'airain tombant à pic sur le désert emplit ce poème chauffé à blanc. Job est en sueur sur son fumier. L'ombre de Job est petite et noire et cachée sous lui comme la vipère sous le rocher. . . . Tout le poème de Job est le développement de cette idée : la grandeur qu'on trouve au fond de l'abîme. Job est plus majestueux misérable que prospère. *Sa lèvre est un pourpre.*"

With due allowance for such occasional felicities, we must still pronounce the work a melancholy mistake. Its swelling ambition irritates and wearies. As a poet and a dramatist Victor Hugo might be expected to have something better to say than such sham profundities as, "L'infini est une exactitude ;" or as the following :—

1. *Le nombre se revèle à l'art par le rythme, qui est le battement du cœur de l'infini. Dans le rythme, loi de l'ordre, on sent Dieu.*

La multiplication des lecteurs, c'est la multiplication des pains. Le jour où le Christ a créé ce symbole, il a entraîné l'impermeable. Son miracle c'est ce prodige. Dans Christ faisant éclorer les pains il y a Guttenberg faisant éclorer les livres. Un gêneur annonce l'autre.

One or two specimens of his elucidations of Shakspeare are all that we can spare room for. "To say that Macbeth is ambition, is saying nothing. Macbeth is hunger. What hunger? The hunger of the monster always possible in man. There are souls which have teeth. Do not awake this hunger." If Macbeth is Hunger, Othello, we learn is, Night. "Immense fatale figure. La nuit est amoureuse du jour. La noirceur aime l'aurore. L'Africain adore la blanche." Beside this Night stands Iago, who is Evil. "Night is but the night of the world; evil is the night of the soul. What obscurity there is in perfidy and falsehood!" What follows is untranslatable: "Quiconque a coudoyé l'imposture et le parjure le sait: on est à tâtons dans un fourbe. Versez l'hypocrisie sur le point du jour vous éteindrez le soleil. C'est là, grâce aux fausses religions, ce qui arrive à Dieu." French rhetoric cannot get on without "Dieu," and Victor Hugo is very French, and very rhetorical. As a final specimen consider this:

Sondez cette chose profonde, Othello c'est la nuit. Et étant la nuit, et voulant tuer, qu'est-ce qu'il prend pour tuer? le poison? la massue? la hache? le couteau? Non, l'orciller. Tuer, c'est endormir. Shakspeare lui-même ne s'est peut-être pas rendu compte de ceci.

The last touch is exquisite.

In only one sense can this extraordinary book be taken as an indication of French opinion, namely, as showing the hyperbolical admiration which an eminent French poet can express for a dramatist once deemed unworthy of the epithets "genius," and "glory." The most illustrious of living dramatists in France proclaims Shakspeare the greatest of all dramatists. Such has been the change from Voltaire to Victor Hugo!

G. H. L.



Oyster Farming.

THE most noteworthy circumstance connected with the art of fish culture is the attention which is at present bestowed on oyster-breeding on the foreshores of France. On many parts of the coast, and particularly at the Ile de Ré, near la Rochelle, thousands of oyster farms have recently started into existence, affording remunerative employment to a large population, who thus provide, and at a comparatively cheap rate, one of the most esteemed luxuries of the table.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that about fifteen years ago there was scarcely an oyster of native growth in France; the beds had become so exhausted from over-dredging as to be unproductive, and the people were consequently in despair at the loss of this favourite adjunct of their banquets, and had to resort to other countries for such small supplies as they could obtain. As an illustration of the over-dredging that had prevailed, it may be stated that oyster farms which formerly employed fourteen hundred men, with two hundred boats, and yielded an annual revenue of 400,000 francs, had become so reduced as to require only one hundred men and twenty boats. Places where at one time there had been as many as fifteen banks and great prosperity among the fisher class, at the period we allude to had become almost oysterless. St. Brieuc, Rochelle, Marennes, Rochesfort, &c., had all suffered so much that those interested in the fisheries were no longer able to stock their beds, thus proving that notwithstanding the enormous fecundity of these sea animals, it is quite possible to overfish them. It was under these circumstances that M. Coste instituted that plan of oyster culture which has been so much noticed of late in the scientific journals. At the instigation of the French Government, the professor made a voyage of exploration round the coasts of France and Italy, in order to inquire into the condition of the sea fisheries which were, it was thought, in a declining condition, and study how they could be aided by artificial means, as the fresh-water fisheries had already been aided through the re-discovery, by Joseph Renny, of the long-forgotten art of pisciculture.

We presume, indeed we know, that it is to the ancient industry carried on in the lake of Fusaro, a piece of water in the bay of Naples, that M. Coste was indebted for his inspiration in the matter of oyster culture, for the art of cultivating this mollusc is still carried on in that classic locality. The breeding of oysters was a business pursued with great assiduity during what may, without impropriety, be called the gastronomic age of Italy—the period when Lucullus kept a stock of fish valued

at fifty thousand pounds sterling, and Sergius Orata invented the art of oyster culture. There is not a great deal known about this ancient gentleman, except that it is pretty certain he was an epicure of most refined taste : the " master of luxury " he was called. While standing his trial for using the public waters of Lake Lucrinus for his own private uses, his advocate Lucinus Crassus said that the revenue officer who prosecuted Orata was mistaken if he thought that gentleman would dispense with his oysters, even if he was driven from the Lake of Lucrinus ; for rather than not enjoy his accustomed luxury, he would grow them on the tops of his houses !

Lake Fusaro, interesting as the first seat of oyster culture, is the Acheron of Virgil. It is a black volcanic-looking pool of water, about a league in circumference, which lies between the site of the Lucrine lake used by Orata and the ruins of the town of Cumæ, and is still extant, being even now, as we have said, devoted to the highly profitable art of oyster farming, and yielding (by report) from this source an annual revenue of about twelve hundred pounds. This classic sheet of water was at one time surrounded by the villas of wealthy Romans, who frequented the place for the joint benefit of the sea-water baths and the shell-fish commissariat which had been established in the two lakes (Avernus and Lucrine). The mode of oyster-breeding at this place, then, as now, was to erect artificial pyramids of stones in the water, surrounded by stakes of wood in order to intercept the spawn, the oysters being laid down on the stones. Faggots of branches were also used for collecting the spawn, which requires, within twenty-four hours of its emission, to secure a speedy holding-on-place, or be lost for ever. The plan of the Fusaro oyster-breeders struck M. Coste as being eminently practical and suitable for imitation. He had one of the stakes pulled up, and was gratified to find it covered with oysters of all ages and sizes.

It is not our purpose in the present paper to enter into the minutiae of oyster life ; indeed, there have been so many controversies on the natural history of this animal, as to render it impossible to narrate in the brief space of a popular Magazine a tenth part of what is known of the life and habits of the " breedly creature." Every stage of its growth has been made the stand-point for a wrangle of some kind. It has been disputed whether or not oysters are male and female, like other animals ; it has been made a matter of controversy on which of its shells it rests, the concave or the flat one ; whether it emits a sound, whether it has any mode of progressing from place to place, how long it is of growing, and when it becomes reproductive. We wish, however, to say this much about the oyster's natural history, namely, that the immense fecundity of the animal is largely detracted from by bad breeding seasons, for unless the spawning season be mild and warm, there is but a very partial fall of *spat*, and a consequent scarcity of brood. And even if one be the proprietor of a large bed of oysters, there is no security for the spawn which is emitted from the oysters of that bed falling upon it, or within the

bounds of one's own property even, for it is often enough the case that the spawn falls at a considerable distance from the place where it has been emitted. Thus, the spawn from the Whitstable and Faversham Oyster Company's beds—and these contain millions of oysters—falls usually enough on a large piece of ground between Whitstable and the Isle of Thanet, formerly common property, but lately given by Act of Parliament to a company recently formed for the breeding of oysters. The saving of the spawn cannot be effected unless it fall on proper ground, and ground with a shelly bottom is best. The infant animal is sure to perish if it fall among mud or upon sand; it *must* obtain a holding-on-place as the first condition of its own existence. The spawn of the oyster is well matured before it leaves the protection of the parental shell, and, by the aid of the microscope, the young animal can be seen with its shells perfect, and its holding-on apparatus, which is also a kind of swimming-pad, ready to clutch the first coigne of vantage that the current may carry it against. The parent oyster goes on "brewing" its spawn for some time; and it is supposed that the spawn swims about with the current for a short period before it falls, being, in the meantime, devoured by countless animals. If each oyster yields, as is thought, about a couple of millions of young, we should say that the operation of brewing, nursing, and exuding from the parental shell will occupy a considerable period—say, from two to four weeks. It is quite certain that the close time for oysters is necessary and advantageous; for we seldom find this animal, as we do the herring and other fishes, full of eggs, so that all the operations connected with its reproduction go on in the months during which there is no dredging. The time at which the oyster becomes reproductive is not known with any exactitude; but in these days of oyster farming the date may be easily fixed, and it will, no doubt, be found to vary in different localities. At some places it becomes marketable in the course of little more than two years, at other places it is three or four years before it becomes a saleable commodity; but on the average it will be quite safe to assume that at four years the oyster is both ripe for sale and reproductive of its kind.

We may just state, before going further, that the best mode of securing the spawn of the oyster has not been determined. M. Coste recommends the adoption of fascines of brushwood to be fixed over the natural oyster-beds, in order to intercept the young ones; others again, as we shall by and by see, have adopted the parks, and have successfully caught the spawn on dikes constructed for that purpose; but Dr. Kemmerer, of St. Martin's, in the Ile de Ré, has invented a tile which he covers with some kind of composition that can as occasion requires be easily peeled off, so that the crop of oysters which may be gathered upon it can be transferred from place to place with the greatest possible ease, and this plan is useful for the transference of the oyster from the collecting park to the fattening claire. The composition and the adhering oysters may all be stripped off in one piece, and the tile be again coated for future use. Hitherto these tiles have been

very successful, although it is thought, by experienced cultivators, that no bottom for oysters is so good as the natural one of "cultch," or old oyster shells; but the tile is often of service in catching the "floatsome," as dredgers call the spawn, and to secure that should be one of the first objects of the oyster farmer. :

The system of cultivation that had been so long and successfully carried on at Lake Fusaro was, with one or two slight modifications, strongly recommended by the French Government to the people as being the most suitable to follow, and experiments were at once entered upon with a view to prove whether it would be as practicable to cultivate oysters among the agitated waves of the open sea as in the quiet waters of Fusaro. In order to settle this point, it was determined to renew the old oyster beds of the Bay of St. Brieuc, and immediate, almost miraculous, success was the result. The fascines laid down soon became covered with spat, and branches were speedily exhibited at Paris and other places containing thousands of young oysters. The experiments in oyster culture tried at St. Brieuc were commenced, early in the spring of 1859, on part of a space of three thousand acres. A quantity of breeding oysters, approaching to three millions, was laid down either on the old beds or on newly constructed longitudinal banks; these were sown thick on a bottom composed chiefly of immense quantities of old shells, the "middens" of Cancale in fact, where the shell accumulations had become a nuisance, so that there was a more than ordinary good chance for the spat finding at once a proper holding-on-place. Then again, over some of the new banks, fascines of boughs were sunk and chained over the beds so as to intercept any portion of the spawn that was likely upon its rising to be carried away by the force of the tide. In less than six months the success of the operations in the Bay of St. Brieuc was assured, for at the proper season a great fall of spawn had occurred, and the bottom shells were covered with the spat, while the fascines were so thickly coated with young oysters that an estimate of 20,000 for each fascine was not thought an exaggeration.

But, a year before the date of the St. Brieuc experiments, the artificial culture of the oyster had been successfully commenced on another part of the French coast, namely, at the Ile de Ré near la Rochelle, in the Bay of Biscay, which is now the capital of French oysterdom, having more parcs and claires than Marennes, Arcachon, Concarneau, Cancale, or all the rest of the coast put together, and which, before it became celebrated for its oyster growing, was only known in common with many other places in France for its successful culture of the vine. It is curious to note the rapid growth of this industry on the Ile de Ré; it was begun so recently as 1858, and there are now, according to Mr. Ashworth, who has obligingly communicated to us his census, taken a few months ago, upwards of four thousand parks and claires upon its shores. It was inaugurated by a stonemason, having the curious name of Beef. This shrewd fellow had been thinking of oyster culture simultaneously with

Professor Coste, and wondering if it could be carried on on those portions of the public foreshore that were left dry by the ebb of the waters. He determined to try the experiment on a small scale so as to obtain a practical solution of his "idea," and with this view he enclosed a small portion of the foreshore by building a rough dike about eighteen inches in height, and in this park he laid down a few bushels of oysters, placing amongst them a quantity of large stones which he gathered out of the surrounding mud. His initiatory experiment was so successful, that, in the course of a year, he was able to sell 6*l.* worth of oysters from his park. This result was of course very encouraging to the enterprising mason, especially as the oysters went on growing while he was at work at his own proper business. Elated by the profit of his experiment, he proceeded at once to double the size of his park, and by that means more than doubled his commerce, for in 1861 he was able to dispose of upwards of 20*l.* worth of his oysters, and that without impoverishing in the least degree his breeding stock. He still continued to increase the dimensions of his park, so that by 1862 his sales had increased to 40*l.* As might have been expected, Beef's neighbours had been carefully watching his experiments, uttering occasional sneers no doubt at his enthusiasm; but, for all that, quite ready to go and do likewise whenever the success of the industrious mason's experiments became sufficiently developed to show that they were profitable. After Beef had demonstrated the practicability of oyster farming, the extension of the system all over the foreshores of the island was rapid and effective, so much so that two hundred beds were conceded previous to 1859, while an additional five hundred beds were speedily laid down, and in 1860 large quantities of brood were sold to the oyster farmers of Marennes for the purpose of being manufactured into green oysters in their claires on the banks of the Seudre. The first sales, after cultivation had become general, amounted to 126*l.* In the season of 1860-61, the oysters sold brought the sum of 321*l.*, and next season the sum reached in sales was upwards of 500*l.*; and these moneys, be it observed, were for very young oysters, because, from an examination of the dates, it will at once be seen that the brood had not had time to grow to any great size. So rapid indeed has been the progress of oyster culture at the Ile de Ré that its foreshores, which were formerly a series of enormous and unproductive mud banks, are now covered with parks and claires. There is only one drawback to these and all other sea-farms in France: the farmers, we regret to say, are only "tenants at will," and liable at any moment to be ejected; but, notwithstanding this disadvantage, the work of oyster culture has gone bravely forward, and it is calculated, in spite of the bad spatting of the last three years, that there is a stock of oysters in the beds—accumulated in only six years—of the value of upwards of 100,000*l.*, which in another year or so will be doubled!

The reader is not, however, to suppose but that much hard work had to be endured before such a scene of industry could be thoroughly

organized. When the great success of Beef's experiments had been proclaimed in the neighbourhood, a little army of agricultural labourers came down from the interior of the country and took possession of the shores, portions of which were conceded to them by the French Government at a nominal rent of about a franc a week. The most arduous duty of these men consisted in clearing off the mud which lay on the shore in large quantities, and which is fatal to the oyster in its early stages. Next, the rocks had to be blasted in order to get stones for the construction of the park walls; then these had to be built; foot-roads had also to be arranged for the convenience of the farmers, and carriage-ways had likewise to be made through the different farms. Ditches had to be contrived to carry off the mud, the parks had to be stocked with breeding oysters, and to be kept carefully free from the various kinds of sea animals that prey upon the oyster, and many other daily duties had to be performed that demanded the minute attention of the owners. But all obstacles were in time overcome, and some of the breeders have been so very successful of late years as to be offered a sum of 100*l.* for the brood attached to twelve of their rows of stones, the cost of laying these down being about 200 francs!

The following are authentic statistics of the oyster industry of the Island of Ré, when only in the fourth year of the venture:—

Parks for collecting Spawn and Breeding	2,424
Fattening Ponds (Claires)	839
Supposed Number of Oysters in Parks	74,242,038
Aggregate Number in the Claires	1,026,282
Revenue of the Parks	1,086,230 francs
Revenue of the Claires	40,015 "
Hectares of Ground in Parks and Claires	146
Proprietors of Beds	1,700

But more interesting even than the material success that has attended the introduction of this industry into the Island of Ré is the moral success that has accompanied the experiment. Excellent laws have been enacted, by the oyster farmers themselves, for the government of their peculiar industry. A kind of parliament has been devised for carrying on arguments as to oyster culture, and to enable the four communities into which the population has been divided to communicate to each other such information as may be found useful for the general good of all engaged in oyster farming. Three delegates from each of the communities are elected to conduct the general business, and to communicate with the Department of Marine when necessary. A small payment is made by each person, as a contribution to the general expense, whilst each division of the community employs a special watchman to guard the crops, and see that all goes on with propriety and good faith. Although each of the oyster farmers of Ré cultivates his park or claire for his own sole profit and advantage, he most willingly obeys those general laws that have been enacted for the good of the community.

One of the most lucrative branches of this foreign oyster farming may be now described, *i.e.* the production of the celebrated green oysters. The greening of oysters—many of which are bought from the Isle of Ré parks—is extensively carried on at Marennes on both sides of the river Seudre, and this particular branch of oyster industry has some features that are quite distinct from those we have been considering, as the green oyster is of considerably more value than the common white oyster. The peculiar colour and taste of the green oyster are imparted to it by the vegetable substances which grow in the beds where it is cultivated. This statement, however, is scarcely an answer to the question "why," or rather "how do oysters become green?" Some people maintain that the oyster green is a disease of the liver-complaint kind, while there are others who attribute the green colour to the presence of a parasite which overgrows the mollusc. But we think that the peculiar culture is in itself a very sufficient answer to the question. The industry carried on at Marennes consists chiefly of the fattening in claires, and the oysters are at one period of their lives as white as those of any other place; indeed it is only after being kept for a year or two in the muddy ponds of the river Seudre, that they attain the much-prized green hue. The enclosed ponds for the growth of these oysters, which according to all epicurean authority is, "*the oyster par excellence,*" require to be water-tight, for they are not submerged by the sea, except during very high tides. The walls for retaining the water require therefore to be very strong; they are composed of low but broad banks of earth, five or six yards thick at their base, and about three feet in height. The flood-gates for the admission of the tide require also to be thoroughly water-tight, and to fit with great precision, as the stock of oysters must always be kept covered with water. A trench or ditch is cut in the inside of each pond for the better collection of the green slime left at each flow of the tide, and many tidal inundations are necessary before the claire is ready for the reception of stock. When all these matters of construction and slime collecting have been attended to, the oysters are then scattered over it and left to fatten. When placed in these greening claires, they are usually from twelve to sixteen months old, and they must remain in them for a period of two years at least before they can be properly greened, and if left a year longer they are all the better; for we maintain that an oyster should be at least four years old before sent to table. Great attention must be devoted to the oysters while they are in the greening pond, and they must be occasionally shifted from one pond to another to ensure perfect success. Many of the oyster farmers of Marennes have two or three claires suitable for this purpose of transfer. The trade in these green oysters is very large. Some of the breeders, or rather preparers of green oysters, anxious to be soon rich, content themselves with placing adult oysters only in their claires, and these become green in a very short time, and thus enable the operator to have several crops in a year, without very much trouble. The claires of Marennes, which occupy a large

area of land on both sides of the Seudre, furnish about fifty millions of oysters per annum, and these are sold at very remunerative prices, yielding an annual revenue approaching to two and a half millions of francs.

The oyster farmers of the river Seudre are also happy and prosperous, many of them having finer houses than they know how to use. The women not only share the prosperity of their husbands, but assist them in their lighter labours, such as separating and arranging the oysters previous to their being placed in the claires. It is also their duty to sell the oysters, and for this purpose they leave their homes about the end of August, and proceed to a particular town, there to wait and dispose of such quantities of shellfish as their husbands may forward to them. In this they resemble the fisherwomen of other countries. The Scottish fishwives do all the financial business connected with the trade carried on by their husbands. It is the men's duty to capture the fish only: the moment they come ashore their duties cease, and those of their wives and daughters begin in the sale and barter of the fish.

The French Government has done its part to facilitate the extension of oyster culture; it has set up model farms in order to give a practical demonstration of the best ways of carrying on the industry, and it has appointed vessels from its navy to the task of watching and protecting the farms. The Government farms are intended to demonstrate all questions connected with the mode of cultivation. Experiments are constantly being made as to the best way of collecting the spawn, and of fattening the oysters. In the Bay of Arcachon, for instance, may be seen great rows of Government fascines, like small houses, the space between being filled in with tiles and stones, and above these are suspended various inventions for spawn collecting in the shape of moveable floors and roofs of tiles, while all around lie scattered great quantities of old shells ready to do duty in the way of collecting such spawn as may not adhere to the other apparatus. As an example of the fitness of these modes of securing the young, it may be stated that as many as a thousand oysters have been counted on one tile. There is an excellent imperial park of the exemplar kind at Concarneau: it is situated in a creek called the Baie de la Ferêt, and was formerly occupied as an oyster farm by a private person. The site of the establishment is thought to be most favourable to the growth of the oysters, as a feeding stream of fresh water flows into the beds, which occupy a space of about thirty imperial acres, and the chief business of these parks is to raise and cultivate brood to stock the parks of such as are beginning oyster farming. The group of parks in this baie have taken four years to complete, and we have no doubt they will be of great use both in serving as models for private breeders, and as depots for the sale of the best kinds of brood.

But as everybody cannot visit the oyster parks of France, it may be interesting if we recross the channel to tell what has been done, and what is now doing in our own country, in the matter of oyster culture; for have we not oyster farms on our own coasts of Kent and Essex? To us the

day being fine, and the sea calm, it seemed a pleasant and brief sail from Ostend, where we had been examining some oyster stews, to Whitstable, and we name this latter place because it is the scene of a very considerable and well-conducted industry in oysters. The oyster farm of Whitstable is held by a joint-stock company; it is a co-operative enterprise in the best sense of the term, and has been in existence for a long period. The oyster-bed of that place is about a mile and a half square, and has been such a very prosperous concern as to have acquired the name of "the happy fishing grounds." At Whitstable, Faversham, and adjoining water farms, not counting the large surface granted to a newly-formed company, a space of twenty-seven square miles is taken up in oyster culture, and the industry carried on in this piece of ground involves the gain and the expenditure of a very large sum of money yearly; 3,000 people are employed, who earn capital wages all the year round—the sum paid for labour by the various companies being set down at over 160,000*l.* per annum, and in addition to this expenditure for wages, a large sum is of course required for the repairing and purchasing of boats, sails, dredges, &c. &c.

The course of work at Whitstable is much as follows:—The business of the company is to feed oysters for the London and other markets; for this purpose they buy brood or spat, and lay it down in their beds to grow. When the company's own oysters produce a spat, that is, when the spawn or "floatsome," emitted from their own beds, falls upon their own ground, so much the better; but this falling of the spat is in a great degree accidental, as no rule can be laid down as to whether the oysters will spawn in any particular year, or where the spawn may be carried to. No artificial contrivances have hitherto been used at Whitstable for the saving of the spawn. We must now explain, before going further, the ratio of growth. While in the spat state it is calculated that a bushel measure will contain 25,000 oysters. When the spawn is two years old it is called brood, and while in this condition a bushel measure will hold 5,500. In the next stage of growth, oysters are called ware, and it takes about 2,000 to fill the bushel. In the final, or oyster stage, a bushel contains 1,500 individuals. Very large sums have been paid in some years by the Whitstable company for brood with which to stock their grounds, great quantities being collected from the Essex side; and a large number of people derive a comfortable income by collecting oyster brood on the public foreshores, and disposing of it to persons who have private oyster nurseries or "layings," as these are locally called. The grounds of Pont—an open water sixteen miles long by three broad—are particularly fruitful in spat, and free to all. About one hundred and fifty boats with crews of three or four men find constant employment upon it in obtaining young oysters, which are sold to the neighbouring oyster farmers, although it is certain that the brood thus freely obtained must have floated out of their own oyster beds. The price of brood is often as high as 40*s.* per bushel, and it is the sum

obtained over this cost price that must be looked to for the paying of wages and the realization of profit.

The beds of Whitstable are "worked" with great industry, and it is the process of "working" that improves the Whitstable oyster so much beyond those found on the natural beds, which are known as "commons," in contradistinction to the bred oysters which are called "natives." These latter are justly considered to be of superior flavour, although no particular reason can be given for their being so. Indeed, in many instances they are not natives at all, but a grand mixture of all kinds, brood being brought from Preston-Pans and Newhaven in the Frith of Forth, and from many other places, to enrich the stock. The so-called native oysters,—and the name is applied to all that are bred in the estuaries of the Thames,—are very large in flesh, succulent, and delicate, and fetch a much higher price than any other oyster. The beds of natives are all situated on the London clay or on similar formations. There can, however, be no doubt that the difference in flavour and quantity of flesh is produced by the system of transplanting and working that is rigorously carried on over all the beds in the estuary of the Thames. Every year the whole extent of the layings are gone over and examined by means of the dredge. Successive portions are dredged over day by day, and it may be said that almost every individual oyster is examined once a year. On the occasion of these examinations the brood is detached from the cultch, double oysters are separated, and all kinds of enemies (and these are very numerous) are seized upon and killed. It requires about eight men per acre to work the beds effectively. During three days a week, dredging for what is called the "planting" is carried on, that is, the transference of the oysters from one place to another, as may be thought suitable for their growth, and also the removing of dead ones, the clearing away of mussels, and so on. On the other three days of the week, it becomes the duty of the men to dredge for the London market. A bell is carried round and rung every morning to rouse the dredgers, and, at a given signal, all the men start to do their portion of the work. There is usually a prescribed task, or "stint," as it is locally called, that is, a certain quantity of oysters to procure of a shapely, sizeable condition, all others being thrown back to the sea, the small and nice-looking ones to wait till their beards be grown, the old and ugly ones to repeat the story of their birth. The business of the Whitstable Oyster Company is managed, and managed well, by a jury of twelve, and the shares or privileges of the company can only be held by the free dredgermen, a society into which there is only one way of admission, namely, by birth. A man's interest in the concern ends by his death, but, if married, the widow is entitled to a pension. The Whitstable Company have a fleet of boats, consisting of dredging smacks, and carrying hoyas—for they still carry on the old fashion of sending their oysters to Billingsgate by the Thames, they do not use the railway—which is valued at 20,000*l.*, and their lying stock of oysters is thought to be worth at least 200,000*l.*

There are several other oyster companies that carry on business in the estuary of the Thames. There is, for instance, the company of the burghers of Queensborough, which is as strictly regulated as that of Whitstable, and which produces the fine Milton oysters. We may also mention the Faversham Company, which claims to be the most ancient of all the Thames companies : it has existed for many centuries. Then there are many gentlemen who own private beds, and carry on a large business. Mr. Allston, a London oyster-merchant, has always from forty to fifty vessels engaged in the trade. These ships vary from small dredging vessels of eight or ten tons to carrying ships of thirty, forty, or fifty tons, according as they are employed on the home banks or in voyages to Ireland or the Channel Islands.

The system of management in all the companies on the Thames is very similar. The Colne Fishery Company, for instance, is superintended by a jury of twelve, appointed by a functionary called the water-bailiff, who, in his turn, is appointed by the corporation of Colchester. At the beginning of the season the jury meet together, take stock of the oysters in hand, and then fix the price at which sales may be made during the season, and also name the price to be paid to the dredgermen for lifting them, which is usually at so much per *wash*, the name of a local measure. The foreman of the company notifies to the dredgers their daily stint, which, of course, varies with the demand, and ranges from three to twelve wash ; but the time occupied in the task is seldom more than a couple of hours, leaving the remainder of the day at the man's own disposal ; and as some of these dredgers are excellent divers, they frequently get extra employment. The professional dredgers who work for the Colne Company make very good wages, at from three to five shillings per wash of two pecks, —a fourth of what they earn is paid for the boat, and the rest of the money is divided among the crew. Private oystermen get their work done cheaper. But take the system of our home oyster farming as a whole, it is highly profitable, and only requires better machinery for the gathering of the spawn to be almost perfect.

We are sorry to know that the Scottish oystermen are not so provident as their brethren of the south. The Firth of Forth may, without exaggeration, be said to be one great oyster-bed ; yet oysters are becoming yearly more difficult to obtain in Edinburgh. The oyster-beds of the Firth of Forth extend for a length of twenty miles, that is, from an island called Inch Muckra to Cooenzie, and at some places the beds are nearly three miles in breadth, the quality of the oysters being remarkably fine. The fishermen, although they hold these beds from the superiors at a merely nominal rent, do nothing in the way of adding to their natural productiveness by culture or cleaning. Five or six millions of oysters are taken out of the Forth every season, and this draught on the banks—coupled with the fact that in some years little or no spawn is emitted, and that the mortality among the young is very severe—it is thought, is now attaining a figure above the ratio of increase.

When we have told that an oyster is thought to yield from one to two millions of young, it may sound improbable that a draught on the banks of six millions a year should be dangerous to the productiveness of the beds; but although all kinds of shell-fish are remarkably fecund, it must be borne in mind that the mortality incidental to sea life is enormous, and there are animals that, according to the dredgers, devour the spat as sailors do pea-soup; and, as we have already stated, if the spawn does not speedily attain a coigne of vantage to which it can cling, it is for ever lost. Even the salmon, with its superior protective advantages, scarcely yields one presentable table fish for each thousand eggs that are spawned.

The Edinburgh oyster beds, which are held from the Corporation and the Duke of Buccleugh, at a total sum of 35*l.* per annum, are managed by the society of free fishermen of Newhaven. The best oysters are found on the beds belonging to the Duke of Buccleugh, but unfortunately they are not allowed to lie a proper time so as to come to maturity and reproduce, in consequence of there being too many boats engaged in the dredging. They number no fewer than from fifty to seventy in all, and the daily takings of each boat vary much, ranging from 1,200 to 2,500: they are usually disposed of at the boat's side, at prices varying from 10*d.* to 3*s.* per hundred—thirty-two being added to each hundred, as is customary among fishermen. Very fine oysters are brought from Preston-Pans, a little fishing-place about eight miles from Edinburgh. These are known as "pandores," and their praises have been celebrated by Christopher North and other celebrated gastronomers. They are said to derive their fine flavour from the refuse water escaping from the salt pans, and they used to be taken close to these establishments, hence their name of "pan-doors." The beds at this part of the Forth are also greatly neglected, so far as any kind of cultivation is concerned, and we regret to see that large quantities of brood are being daily dredged for the purpose of feeding the oyster beds in the estuary of the Thames. Upon the last occasion of our inspecting these beds no less than a hundred barrels of oyster brood were in course of being despatched to the beds of Whitstable and neighbourhood, so that next year, or next again, the Londoners will, in all probability, be feasting on the pandore "natives" of Preston-Pans.

The wholesale spoliation now going on at the oyster-beds of the Frith of Forth is greatly to be regretted, although we think it is destined to work its own cure, for the beds once thoroughly exhausted from the over-dredging which is now going on—and it is so great that the oysters consumed in Edinburgh will soon have to be brought from London—will in all probability be given over to persons to restock on the plan now so popular on the continent, and the fishermen be very properly deprived of the chance of ever again despouling them. The Frith of Forth seems as if it had been destined by nature for the laying down of oyster farms: every inch of the bottom of that river might be laid thick with oysters from Alloa to North Berwick. A thousand oyster farmers might within the bounds of the present beds carry on a highly remunerative business.

It is pleasing to note that the Irish people are becoming in some degree alive to the productive powers of their seaboard, and that licences for the formation of oyster beds on various parts of the coast are constantly applied for; so large a space as 5,000 acres, extending over the shores of ten counties, having been granted by the Fishery Commissioners to twenty-six different persons for the purposes of oyster farming. What is wanted in the sister isle is "a public opinion" on the subject of the fisheries; this, Mr. Redmond Barry, who has kindly sent us a great budget of information, is labouring to create. As regards the Irish oyster fisheries, it is curious to note that, although the Irish "natives" had at one time a very bad reputation, all the great banks have been cleaned out by over fishing. The celebrated Carlingsford beds are exhausted, so are the many beds of Sligo, as also the oyster banks of Clare; on the far-famed Tralee beds there is not even the ghost of a shell to be found, while some of the remaining beds are being so rapidly exhausted by the transportation of the young oysters to the English banks, that in a short time they, too, will be without a single oyster. As much as 8,000l. have been paid for brood at certain of the Irish fisheries, and this was shipped away to be fed as natives in the Thames. A celebrated Thames oyster farmer, who has largely surveyed the Irish coast, is of opinion that it contains many fine spots for the laying down of oyster beds, and that a very large commerce might be carried on, if not in oysters for consumption, at any rate in brood, for the Thames oyster companies.

According to a correspondent of *The Times*, the number of oysters consumed in Paris is at the rate of upwards of one million per day! In order that a proper judgment might be come to as regards the flavour and quality of French grown oysters, a tasting exhibition was recently held by the Acclimatization Society of Paris, when a great number of different growths were criticized. The oysters were all opened on the deep shell, and were not touched by spoon or fork, but were sucked into the mouth, which is the proper way to eat them, and had no condiment other than their own sauce. We need not go over the names of the localities preferred; suffice it to say, that great praise was bestowed on this new phase of French industry, and on M. Coste for its development. We consume enormous quantities of oysters, too, and surely we can do in England what is done so easily in France. From what is annually accomplished in the estuary of the Thames, without much culture, it is clear that our supplies can be largely augmented, and that, however great may be the demand, it can be met by an extension of the plan of oyster farming.



Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.



CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW MAMMA.



N Tuesday afternoon Molly returned home, to the home which was already strange, and what Warwickshire people would call "unked," to her. New paint, new paper, new colours; grim servants dressed in their best, and objecting to every change—from their master's marriage to the new oilcloth in the hall, "which tripped 'em up, and threw 'em down, and was cold to the feet, and smelt just abominable." All these complaints Molly had to listen to, and it was not a cheerful preparation for the reception which she already felt to be so formidable.

The sound of their carriage-wheels was heard at last, and Molly went to the front door to meet them. Her father got out first, and took

her hand and held it while he helped his bride to alight. Then he kissed her fondly, and passed her on to his wife; but her veil was so securely (and becomingly) fastened down, that it was some time before Mrs. Gibson could get her lips clear to greet her new daughter. Then there was luggage to be seen about; and both the travellers were occupied in this, while Molly stood by, trembling with excitement, unable to help, and only conscious of Betty's rather cross looks, as heavy box after heavy box jammed up the passage.

"Molly, my dear, show—your mamma to her room!"

Mr. Gibson had hesitated, because the question of the name by which Molly was to call her new relation had never occurred to him before. The colour flashed into Molly's face. Was she to call her "mamma?"—the name long appropriated in her mind to some one else—to her own dead mother. The rebellious heart rose against it, but she said nothing.

She led the way upstairs, Mrs. Gibson turning round, from time to time, with some fresh direction as to which bag or trunk she needed most. She hardly spoke to ~~olly~~ till they were both in the newly-furnished bedroom, where a small fire had been lighted by Molly's orders.

"Now, my love, we can embrace each other in peace. O dear, how tired I am!"—(after the embrace had been accomplished.) "My spirits are so easily affected with fatigue; but your dear papa has been kindness itself. Dear! what an old-fashioned bed! And what a— But it doesn't signify. By and by we'll renovate the house—won't we, my dear? And you'll be my little maid to-night, and help me to arrange a few things, for I'm just worn out with the day's journey."

"I've ordered a sort of tea-dinner to be ready for you," said Molly. "Shall I go and tell them to send it in?"

"I'm not sure if I can go down again to-night. It would be very comfortable to have a little table brought in here, and sit in my dressing-gown by this cheerful fire. But, to be sure, there's your dear papa? I really don't think he would eat anything if I were not there. One must not think about oneself, you know. Yes, I'll come down in a quarter of an hour."

But Mr. Gibson had found a note awaiting him, with an immediate summons to an old patient, dangerously ill; and, snatching a mouthful of food while his horse was being saddled, he had to resume at once his old habits of attention to his profession above everything.

As soon as Mrs. Gibson found that he was not likely to miss her presence—he had eaten a very tolerable lunch of bread and cold meat in solitude, so her fears about his appetite in her absence were not well founded—she desired to have her meal upstairs in her own room; and poor Molly, not daring to tell the servants of this whim, had to carry up first a table, which, however small, was too heavy for her; and afterwards all the choice portions of the meal, which she had taken great pains to arrange on the table, as she had seen such things done at Hamley, intermixed with fruit and flowers that had that morning been sent in from various great houses where Mr. Gibson was respected and valued. How pretty Molly had thought her handiwork an hour or two before! How dreary it seemed as, at last released from Mrs. Gibson's conversation, she sat down in solitude to cold tea and the drumsticks of the chicken! No one to look at her preparations, and admire her dexterousness and taste! She had thought that her father would be gratified by it, and then he had never seen it. She had meant her cares as an offering of good-will to her stepmother, who even now was ringing her bell to have the tray taken away, and Miss Gibson summoned to her bedroom.

Molly hastily finished her meal, and went upstairs again.

"I feel so lonely, darling, in this strange house; do come and be with me, and help me to unpack. I think your dear papa might have put off his visit to Mr. Craven Smith for just this one evening."

"Mr. Craven Smith couldn't put off his dying," said Molly, bluntly.

"You droll girl!" said Mrs. Gibson, with a faint laugh. "But if this Mr. Smith is dying, as you say, what's the use of your father's going off to him in such a hurry? Does he expect any legacy, or anything of that kind?"

Molly bit her lips to prevent herself from saying something disagreeable. She only answered,—

"I don't quite know that he is dying. The man said so; and papa can sometimes do something to make the last struggle easier. At any rate, it's always a comfort to the family to have him."

"What dreary knowledge of death you have learned for a girl of your age! Really, if I had heard all these details of your father's profession, I doubt if I could have brought myself to have him!"

"He doesn't make the illness or the death; he does his best against them. I call it a very fine thing to think of what he does or tries to do. And you will think so, too, when you see how he is watched for, and how people welcome him!"

"Well, don't let us talk any more of such gloomy things to-night! I think I shall go to bed at once, I am so tired, if you will only sit by me till I get sleepy, darling. If you will talk to me, the sound of your voice will soon send me off."

Molly got a book, and read her stepmother to sleep, preferring that to the harder task of keeping up a continual murmur of speech.

Then she stole down and went into the dining-room, where the fire was gone out; purposely neglected by the servants, to mark their displeasure at their new mistress's having had her tea in her own room. Molly managed to light it, however, before her father came home, and collected and rearranged some comfortable food for him. Then she knelt down again on the hearth-rug, gazing into the fire in a dreamy reverie, which had enough of sadness about it to cause the tears to drop unnoticed from her eyes. But she jumped up, and shook herself into brightness at the sound of her father's step.

"How is Mr. Craven Smith?" said she.

"Dead. He just recognized me. He was one of my first patients on coming to Hollingford."

Mr. Gibson sat down in the arm-chair made ready for him, and warmed his hands at the fire, seeming neither to need food nor talk, as he went over a train of recollections. Then he roused himself from his sadness, and looking round the room, he said briskly enough,—

"And where's the new mamma?"

"She was tired, and went to bed early. Oh, papa! must I call her 'mamma'?"

"I should like it," replied he, with a slight contraction of the brows.

Molly was silent. She put a cup of tea near him; he stirred it, and sipped it, and then he recurred to the subject.

"Why shouldn't you call her 'mamma'? I'm sure she means to do

the duty of a mother to you. We all may make mistakes, and her ways may not be quite all at once our ways ; but at any rate let us start with a family bond between us."

What would Roger say was right ?—that was the question that rose to Molly's mind. She had always spoken of her father's new wife as Mrs. Gibson, and had once burst out at Miss Brownings' with a protestation that she never would call her "mamma." She did not feel drawn to her new relation by their intercourse that evening. She kept silence, though she knew her father was expecting an answer. At last he gave up his expectation, and turned to another subject ; told about their journey, questioned her as to the Hamleys, the Brownings, Lady Harriet, and the afternoon they had passed together at the Manor House. But there was a certain hardness and constraint in his manner, and in hers a heaviness and absence of mind. All at once she said,—

"Papa, I will call her 'mamma !'"

He took her hand, and grasped it tight ; but for an instant or two he did not speak. Then he said,—

" You won't be sorry for it, Molly, when you come to lie as poor Craven Smith did to-night."

For some time the murmurs and grumblings of the two elder servants were confined to Molly's ears, then they spread to her father's, who, to Molly's dismay, made summary work with them.

" You don't like Mrs. Gibson's ringing her bell so often, don't you ? You've been spoilt, I'm afraid ; but if you don't conform to my wife's desires, you have the remedy in your own hands, you know."

What servant ever resisted the temptation to give warning after such a speech as that ? Betty told Molly she was going to leave, in as indifferent a manner as she could possibly assume towards the girl, whom she had tended and been about for the last sixteen years. Molly had hitherto considered her former nurse as a fixture in the house ; she would almost as soon have thought of her father's proposing to sever the relationship between them ; and here was Betty coolly talking over whether her next place should be in town or country. But a great deal of this was assumed hardness. In a week or two Betty was in floods of tears at the prospect of leaving her nursling, and would fain have stayed and answered all the bells in the house once every quarter of an hour. Even Mr. Gibson's masculine heart was touched by the sorrow of the old servant, which made itself obvious to him every time he came across her by her broken voice and her swollen eyes.

One day he said to Molly, "I wish you'd ask your mamma if Betty might not stay, if she made a proper apology, and all that sort of thing."

" I don't much think it will be of any use," said Molly, in a mournful voice. " I know she is writing, or has written, about some under-house-maid at the Towers."

" Well !—all I want is peace and a decent quantity of cheerfulness

when I come home. I see enough of tears in other people's houses. After all, Betty has been with us sixteen years—a sort of service of the antique world. But the woman may be happier elsewhere. Do as you like about asking mamma; only if she agrees, I shall be quite willing."

So Molly tried her hand at making a request to that effect to Mrs. Gibson. Her instinct told her she should be unsuccessful; but surely favour was never refused in so soft a tone.

"My dear girl, I should never have thought of sending an old servant away,—one who has had the charge of you from your birth, or nearly so. I could not have had the heart to do it. She might have stayed for ever for me, if she had only attended to all my wishes; and I am not unreasonable, am I? But, you see, she complained; and when your dear papa spoke to her, she gave warning; and it is quite against my principles ever to take an apology from a servant who has given warning."

"She is so sorry," pleaded Molly; "she says she will do anything you wish, and attend to all your orders, if she may only stay."

"But, sweet one, you seem to forget that I cannot go against my principles, however much I may be sorry for Betty. She should not have given way to ill-temper, as I said before; although I never liked her, and considered her a most inefficient servant, thoroughly spoilt by having had no mistress for so long, I should have borne with her—at least, I think I should—as long as I could. Now I have all but engaged Maria, who was under-housemaid at the Towers, so don't let me hear any more of Betty's sorrow, or anybody else's sorrow, for I'm sure, what with your dear papa's sad stories and other things, I'm getting quite low."

Molly was silent for a moment or two.

"Have you quite engaged Maria?" asked she.

"No—I said 'all but engaged.' Sometimes one would think you did not hear things, dear Molly!" replied Mrs. Gibson, petulantly. "Maria is living in a place where they don't give her as much wages as she deserves. Perhaps they can't afford it, poor things! I'm always sorry for poverty, and would never speak hardly of those who are not rich; but I have offered her two pounds more than she gets at present, so I think she'll leave. At any rate, if they increase her wages, I shall increase my offer in proportion; so I think I'm sure to get her. Such a genteel girl!—always brings in a letter on a salver!"

"Poor Betty!" said Molly, softly.

"Poor old soul! I hope she'll profit by the lesson, I'm sure," sighed out Mrs. Gibson; "but it's a pity we hadn't Maria before the county families began to call."

Mrs. Gibson had been highly gratified by the circumstance of so many calls "from county families." Her husband was much respected; and many ladies from various halls, courts, and houses, who had profited by his services towards themselves and their families, thought it right to

pay his new wife the attention of a call when they drove into Hellingsford to shop. The state of expectation into which these calls threw Mrs. Gibson rather diminished Mr. Gibson's domestic comfort. It was awkward to be carrying hot, savoury-smelling dishes from the kitchen to the dining-room at the very time when high-born ladies, with noses of aristocratic refinement, might be calling. Still more awkward was the accident which happened in consequence of clumsy Betty's haste to open the front door to a losty footman's ran-tan, which caused her to set down the basket containing the dirty plates right in his mistress's way, as she stepped gingerly through the comparative darkness of the hall; and then the young men, leaving the dining-room quietly enough, but bursting with long-repressed giggle, or no longer restraining their tendency to practical joking, no matter who might be in the passage when they made their exit. The remedy proposed by Mrs. Gibson for all these distressing grievances was a late dinner. The luncheon for the young men, as she observed to her husband, might be sent into the surgery. A few elegant cold trifles for herself and Molly would not scent the house, and she would always take care to have some little dainty ready for him. He acceded, but unwillingly, for it was an innovation on the habits of a lifetime, and he felt as if he should never be able to arrange his rounds aright with this new-fangled notion of a six o'clock dinner.

"Don't get any dainties for me, my dear ; bread and cheese is the chief of my diet, like it was that of the old woman's."

"I know nothing of your old woman," replied his wife ; "but really I cannot allow cheese to come beyond the kitchen."

"Then I'll eat it there," said he. "It's close to the stable-yard, and if I come in in a hurry I can get it in a moment."

"Really, Mr. Gilson, it is astonishing to compare your appearance and manners with your tastes. You look such a gentleman, as dear Lady Cuninor used to say."

Then the cook left; also an old servant, though not so old a one as Betty. The cook did not like the trouble of late dinners; and, being a Methodist, she objected on religious grounds to trying any of Mrs. Gibson's new receipts for French dishes. It was not scriptural, she said. There was a deal of mention of food in the Bible; but it was of sheep ready dressed, which meant mutton, and of wine, and of bread and milk, and figs and raisins, of fatted calves, a good well-browned fillet of veal, and such like; but it had always gone against her conscience to cook swine-flesh and make raised pork-piea, and now if she was to be set to cook heathen dishes after the fashion of the Papista, she'd sooner give it all up together. So the cook followed in Betty's track, and Mr. Gibson had to satisfy his healthy English appetite on badly made omelettes, rissoles, vol-au-vents, croquets, and timbales; never being exactly sure what he was eating.

He had made up his mind before his marriage to yield in trifles, and be firm in greater things. But the differences of opinion about trifles arose every day, and were perhaps more annoying than if they had related

to things of more consequence. Molly knew her father's looks as well as she knew her alphabet; his wife did not; and being an unperceptive person, except when her own interests were dependent upon another person's humour, never found out how he was worried by all the small daily concessions which he made to her will or her whims. He never allowed himself to put any regret into shape, even in his own mind; he repeatedly reminded himself of his wife's good qualities, and comforted himself by thinking they should work together better as time rolled on; but he was very angry at a bachelor great-uncle of Mr. Coxe's, who, after taking no notice of his red-headed nephew for years, suddenly sent for him, after the old man had partially recovered from a serious attack of illness, and appointed him his heir, on condition that his great-nephew remained with him during the remainder of his life. This had happened almost directly after Mr. and Mrs. Gibson's return from their wedding journey, and once or twice since that time Mr. Gibson had found himself wondering why the deuce old Benson could not have made up his mind sooner, and so have rid his house of the unwelcome presence of the young lover. To do Mr. Coxe justice, in the very last conversation he had as a pupil with Mr. Gibson he had said, with hesitating awkwardness, that perhaps the new circumstances in which he should be placed might make some difference with regard to Mr. Gibson's opinion on—

"Not at all," said Mr. Gibson, quickly. "You are both of you too young to know your own minds; and if my daughter was silly enough to be in love, she should never have to calculate her happiness on the chances of an old man's death. I dare say he'll disinherit you after all. He may do, and then you'd be worse off than ever. No! go away, and forget all this nonsense; and when you've done, come back and see us!"

So Mr. Coxe went away, with an oath of unalterable faithfulness in his heart; and Mr. Gibson had unwillingly to fulfil an old promise made to a gentleman farmer in the neighbourhood a year or two before, and to take the second son of Mr. Browne in young Coxe's place. He was to be the last of the race of pupils, and he was rather more than a year younger than Molly. Mr. Gibson trusted that there would be no repetition of the Coxe romance.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BRIDE AT HOME.

AMONG the "county people" (as Mrs. Gibson termed them) who called upon her as a bride, were the two young Mr. Hamleys. The squire, their father, had done his congratulations, as far as he ever intended to do them, to Mr. Gibson himself when he came to the hall; but Mrs. Hamley, unable to go and pay visits herself, anxious to show attention to her kind doctor's new wife, and with perhaps a little sympathetic curiosity as to how Molly and her stepmother got on together, made her sons ride

over to Hollingford with her cards and apologies. They came into the newly-furnished drawing-room, looking bright and fresh from their ride : Osborne first, as usual, perfectly dressed for the occasion, and with the sort of fine manner which sate so well upon him ; Roger, looking like a strong-built, cheerful, intelligent country farmer, followed in his brother's train. Mrs. Gibson was dressed for receiving callers, and made the effect she always intended to produce, of a very pretty woman, no longer in first youth, but with such soft manners and such a caressing voice, that people forgot to wonder what her real age might be. Molly was better dressed than formerly ; her stepmother saw after that. She disliked anything old or shabby, or out of taste about her ; it hurt her eye ; and she had already fidgeted Molly into a new amount of care about the manner in which she put on her clothes, arranged her hair, and was gloved and shod. Mrs. Gibson had tried to put her through a course of rosemary washes and creams in order to improve her tanned complexion ; but about that Molly was either forgetful or rebellious, and Mrs. Gibson could not well come up to the girl's bedroom every night and see that she daubed her face and neck over with the cosmetics so carefully provided for her. Still her appearance was extremely improved, even to Osborne's critical eye. Roger sought rather to discover in her looks and expression whether she was happy or not ; his mother had especially charged him to note all these signs.

Osborne and Mrs. Gibson made themselves agreeable to each other according to the approved fashion when a young man calls on a middle-aged bride. They talked of the "Shakspeare and musical glasses" of the day, each vying with the other in their knowledge of London topics. Molly heard fragments of their conversation in the pauses of silence between Roger and herself. Her hero was coming out in quite a new character ; no longer literary or poetical, or romantic, or critical, he was now full of the last new play, the singers at the opera. He had the advantage over Mrs. Gibson, who, in fact, only spoke of these things from hearsay, from listening to the talk at the Towers, while Osborne had run up from Cambridge two or three times to hear this, or to see that wonder of the season. But she had the advantage over him in greater boldness of invention to eke out her facts ; and besides she had more skill in the choice and arrangement of her words, so as to make it appear as if the opinions that were in reality quotations, were formed by herself from actual experience or personal observation ; such as, in speaking of the mannerisms of a famous Italian singer, she would ask,—

"Did you observe her constant trick of heaving her shoulders and clasping her hands together before she took a high note ?"—which was so said as to imply that Mrs. Gibson herself had noticed this trick. Molly, who had a pretty good idea by this time of how her stepmother had passed the last year of her life, listened with no small bewilderment to this conversation ; but at length decided that she must misunderstand what they were saying, as she could not gather up the missing links for the necessity of replying to Roger's questions and remarks. Osborne was

not the same Osborne he was when with his mother at the hall. Roger saw her glancing at his brother.

"You think my brother looking ill?" said he, lowering his voice.

"No—not exactly."

"He is not well. Both my father and I are anxious about him. That run on the Continent did him harm, instead of good; and his disappointment at his examination has told upon him, I'm afraid."

"I was not thinking he looked ill; only changed somehow."

"He says he must go back to Cambridge soon. Possibly it may do him good; and I shall be off next week. This is a farewell visit to you, as well as one of congratulation to Mrs. Gibson."

"Your mother will feel your both going away, won't she? But of course young men will always have to live away from home."

"Yes," he replied. "Still she feels it a good deal; and I am not satisfied about her health either. You will go out and see her sometimes, will you? she is very fond of you."

"If I may," said Molly, unconsciously glancing at her stepmother. She had an uncomfortable instinct that, in spite of Mrs. Gibson's own perpetual flow of words, she could, and did, hear everything that fell from Molly's lips.

"Do you want any more books?" said he. "If you do, make a list out, and send it to my mother before I leave, next Tuesday. After I am gone, there will be no one to go into the library and pick them out."

After they were gone, Mrs. Gibson began her usual comments on the departed visitors.

"I do like that Osborne Hamley! What a nice fellow he is! Somehow, I always do like eldest sons. He will have the estate, won't he? I shall ask your dear papa to encourage him to come about the house. He will be a very good, very pleasant acquaintance for you and Cynthia. The other is but a loutish young fellow, to my mind; there is no aristocratic bearing about him. I suppose he takes after his mother, who is but a parvenue, I've heard them say at the Towers."

Molly was spiteful enough to have great pleasure in saying,—

"I think I've heard her father was a Russian merchant, and imported tallow and hemp. Mr. Osborne Hamley is extremely like her."

"Indeed! But there's no calculating these things. Anyhow, he is the perfect gentleman in appearance and manner. The estate is entailed, is it not?"

"I know nothing about it," said Molly.

A short silence ensued. Then Mrs. Gibson said,—

"Do you know, I almost think I must get dear papa to give a little dinner-party, and ask Mr. Osborne Hamley? I should like to have him feel at home in this house. It would be something cheerful for him after the dulness and solitude of Hamley Hall. For the old people don't visit much, I believe?"

"He's going back to Cambridge next week," said Molly.

"Is he? Well, then, we'll put off our little dinner till Cynthia comes home. I should like to have some young society for her, poor darling, when she returns."

"When is she coming?" said Molly, who had always a longing curiosity for this same Cynthia's return.

"Oh! I'm not sure; perhaps at the new year—perhaps not till Easter. I must get this drawing-room all new furnished first; and then I mean to fit up her room and yours just alike. They are just the same size, only on opposite sides of the passage."

"Are you going to new-furnish that room?" said Molly, in astonishment at the never-ending changes.

"Yes; and yours, too, darling; so don't be jealous."

"Oh, please, mamma, not mine," said Molly, taking in the idea for the first time.

"Yes, dear! You shall have yours done as well. A little French bed, and a new paper, and a pretty carpet, and a dressed-up toilet-table and glass, will make it look quite a different place."

"But I don't want it to look different. I like it as it is. Pray don't do anything to it."

"What nonsense, child! I never heard anything more ridiculous! Most girls would be glad to get rid of furniture only fit for the lumber-room."

"It was my own mamma's before she was married," said Molly, in a very low voice; bringing out this last plea unwillingly, but with a certainty that it would not be resisted.

Mrs. Gibson paused for a moment before she replied:

"It's very much to your credit that you should have such feelings, I'm sure. But don't you think sentiment may be carried too far? Why, we should have no new furniture at all, and should have to put up with worm-eaten horrors. Besides, my dear, Hollingsford will seem very dull to Cynthia, after pretty, gay France, and I want to make the first impressions attractive. I've a notion I can settle her down near here; and I want her to come in a good temper; for, between ourselves, my dear, she is a little, leetle wilful. You need not mention this to your papa."

"But can't you do Cynthia's room, and not mine? Please let mine alone."

"No, indeed! I couldn't agree to that. Only think what would be said of me by everybody; petting my own child, and neglecting my husband's! I couldn't bear it."

"No one need know."

"In such a tittle-tattle place as Hollingsford! Really, Molly, you are either very stupid or very obstinate, or else you don't care what hard things may be said about me; and all for a selfish fancy of your own! No! I owe myself the justice of acting in this matter as I please. Every one shall know I'm not a common stepmother. Every penny I spend on Cynthia I shall spend on you too; so it's no use talking any more about it."

So Molly's little white dimity bed, her old-fashioned chest of drawers, and her other cherished relics of her mother's maiden-days, were consigned to the lumber-room ; and after a while, when Cynthia and her great French boxes had come home, the old furniture that had filled up the space required for the fresh importation of trunks, disappeared into the lumber-room.

All this time the family at the Towers had been absent ; Lady Cumnor had been ordered to Bath for the early part of the winter, and her family were with her there. On dull rainy days, Mrs. Gibson used to bethink her of missing "the Cumnors," for so she had taken to calling them since her position had become more independent of theirs. It marked a distinction between her intimacy in the family, and the reverential manner in which the townspeople were accustomed to speak of "the earl and the countess." Both Lady Cumnor and Lady Harriet wrote to their dear Clare from time to time. The former had generally some commissions that she wished to have executed at the Towers, or in the town ; and no one could do them so well as Clare, who was acquainted with all the tastes and ways of the countess. These commissions were the cause of various bills for flys and cars from the George Inn. Mr. Gibson pointed out this consequence to his wife ; but she, in return, bade him remark that a present of game was pretty sure to follow upon the satisfactory execution of Lady Cumnor's wishes. Somehow, Mr. Gibson did not quite like this consequence either ; but he was silent about it, at any rate. Lady Harriet's letters were short and amusing. She had that sort of regard for her old governess which prompted her to write from time to time, and to feel glad when the half-voluntary task was accomplished. So there was no real outpouring of confidence, but enough news of the family and gossip of the place she was in, as she thought would make Clare feel that she was not forgotten by her former pupils, intermixed with moderate but sincere expressions of regard. How those letters were quoted and referred to by Mrs. Gibson in her conversations with the Hollingsford ladies ! She had found out their effect at Ashcombe ; and it was not less at Hollingsford. But she was rather perplexed at kindly messages to Molly, and at inquiries as to how the Miss Brownings liked the tea she had sent ; and Molly had first to explain, and then to narrate at full length, all the occurrences of the afternoon at Ashcombe Manor House, and Lady Harriet's subsequent call upon her at Miss Brownings'.

" What nonsense ! " said Mrs. Gibson, with some annoyance. " Lady Harriet only went to see you out of a desire of amusement. She would only make fun of Miss Brownings, and those two will be quoting her and talking about her, just as if she was their intimate friend."

" I don't think she did make fun of them. She really seemed as if she had been very kind."

" And you suppose you know her ways better than I do, who have known her these fifteen years ? I tell you she turns every one into ridi-

cule who does not belong to her set. Why, she used always to speak of Miss Brownings as 'Pecksy and Flapsy.'

"She promised me she would not," said Molly driven to bay.

"Promised you!—Lady Harriet? What do you mean?"

"Only—she spoke of them as Pecksy and Flapsy—and when she talked of coming to call on me at their house, I asked her not to come if she was going to—to make fun of them."

"Upon my word! with all my long acquaintance with Lady Harriet I should never have ventured on such impertinence."

"I didn't mean it as impertinence," said Molly, sturdily. "And I don't think Lady Harriet took it as such."

"You can't know anything about it. She can put on any kind of manner."

Just then Squire Hamley came in. It was his first call; and Mrs. Gibson gave him a graceful welcome, and was quite ready to accept his apology for its tardiness, and to assure him that she quite understood the pressure of business on every landowner who farmed his own estate. But no such apology was made. He shook her hand heartily, as a mark of congratulation on her good fortune in having secured such a prize as his friend Gibson, but said nothing about his long neglect of duty. Molly, who by this time knew the few strong expressions of his countenance well, was sure that something was the matter, and that he was very much disturbed. He hardly attended to Mrs. Gibson's fluent opening of conversation, for she had already determined to make a favourable impression on the father of the handsome young man who was heir to an estate, besides his own personal agreeableness; but he turned to Molly, and, addressing her, said—almost in a low voice, as if he was making a confidence to her that he did not intend Mrs. Gibson to hear,—

"Molly, we are all wrong at home! Osborne has lost the fellowship at Trinity he went back to try for. Then he has gone and failed miserably in his degree, after all that he said, and that his mother said; and I, like a fool, went and boasted about my clever son. I can't understand it. I never expected anything extraordinary from Roger; but Osborne—! And then it has thrown madam into one of her bad fits of illness; and she seems to have a fancy for you, child! Your father came to see her this morning. Poor thing, she's very poorly, I'm afraid; and she told him how she should like to have you about her, and he said I might fetch you. You'll come, won't you, my dear? She's not a poor woman, such as many people think it's the only charity to be kind to, but she's just as forlorn of woman's care as if she was poor—worse, I dare say."

"I'll be ready in ten minutes," said Molly, much touched by the squire's words and manner, never thinking of asking her stepmother's consent, now that she had heard that her father had given his. As she rose to leave the room, Mrs. Gibson, who had only half heard what the squire had said, and was a little affronted at the exclusiveness of his confidence, said,—"My dear, where are you going?"

"Mrs. Hamley wants me, and papa says I may go," said Molly; and almost at the same time the squire replied,—

"My wife is ill, and as she's very fond of your daughter, she begged Mr. Gibson to allow her to come to the Hall for a little while, and he kindly said she might, and I'm come to fetch her."

"Stop a minute, darling," said Mrs. Gibson to Molly—a slight cloud over her countenance, in spite of her caressing word. "I am sure dear papa quite forgot that you were to go out with me to-night, to visit people," continued she, addressing herself to the squire, "with whom I am quite unacquainted—and it is very uncertain if Mr. Gibson can return in time to go with me—so, you see, I cannot allow Molly to go with you."

"I shouldn't have thought it would have signified. Brides are always brides, I suppose; and it's their part to be timid; but I shouldn't have thought it—in this case. And my wife sets her heart on things, as sick people do. Well, Molly" (in a louder tone, for these foregoing sentences were spoken *sotto voce*), "we must put it off till to-morrow: and it's our loss, not yours," he continued, as he saw the reluctance with which she slowly returned to her place. "You'll be as gay as can be to-night, I dare say——"

"No, I shall not," broke in Molly. "I never wanted to go, and now I shall want it less than ever."

"Hush, my dear," said Mrs. Gibson; and, addressing the squire, she added, "the visiting here is not all one could wish for so young a girl—no young people, no dances, nothing of gaiety; but it is wrong in you, Molly, to speak against such kind friends of your father's as I understand these Cockerells are. Don't give so bad an impression of yourself to the kind squire."

"Let her alone! let her alone!" quoth he. "I see what she means. She'd rather come and be in my wife's sick-room than go out for this visit to-night. Is there no way of getting her off?"

"None whatever," said Mrs. Gibson. "An engagement is an engagement with me; and I consider that she is not only engaged to Mrs. Cockerell, but to me—bound to accompany me, in my husband's absence."

The squire was put out; and when he was put out he had a trick of placing his hands on his knees and whistling softly to himself. Molly knew this phase of his displeasure, and only hoped he would confine himself to this wordless expression of annoyance. It was pretty hard work for her to keep the tears out of her eyes; and she endeavoured to think of something else, rather than dwell on regrets and annoyances. She heard Mrs. Gibson talking on in a sweet monotone, and wished to attend to what she was saying, but the squire's visible annoyance struck sharper on her mind. At length, after a pause of silence, he started up, and said,—

"Well! it's no use. Poor madam; she won't like it. She'll be disappointed! But it's but for one evening!—but for one evening! She

may come to-morrow, mayn't she? Or will the dissipation of such an evening as she describes, be too much for her?"

There was a touch of savage irony in his manner which frightened Mrs. Gibson into good behaviour.

"She shall be ready at any time you name. I am so sorry: my foolish shyness is in fault, I believe; but still you must acknowledge that an engagement is an engagement."

"Did I ever say an engagement was an elephant, madam? However, there's no use saying any more about it, or I shall forget my manners. I'm an old tyrant, and she—lying there in bed, poor girl—has always given me my own way. So you'll excuse me, Mrs. Gibson, won't you; and let Molly come along with me at ten to-morrow morning?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Gibson, smiling. But when his back was turned, she said to Molly,—

"Now, my dear, I must never have you exposing me to the ill-manners of such a man again! I don't call him a squire; I call him a boor, or a yeoman at best. You must not go on accepting or rejecting invitations as if you were an independent young lady, Molly. Pay me the respect of a reference to my wishes another time, if you please, my dear!"

"Papa had said I might go," said Molly, choking a little.

"As I am now your mamma your references must be to me, for the future. But as you are to go you may as well look well dressed. I will lend you my new shawl for this visit, if you like it, and my set of green ribbons. I am always indulgent when proper respect is paid to me. And in such a house as Hainley Hall, no one can tell who may be coming and going, even if there is sickness in the family."

"Thank you. But I don't want the shawl and the ribbons, please: there will be nobody there except the family. There never is, I think; and now that she is so ill"—Molly was on the point of crying at the thought of her friend lying ill and lonely, and looking for her arrival. Moreover, she was sadly afraid lest the squire had gone off with the idea that she did not want to come—that she preferred that stupid, stupid party at the Cockerells'. Mrs. Gibson, too, was sorry; she had an uncomfortable consciousness of having given way to temper before a stranger, and a stranger, too, whose good opinion she had meant to cultivate: and she was also annoyed at Molly's tearful face.

"What can I do for you, to bring you back into good temper?" she said. "First, you insist upon your knowing Lady Harriet better than I do—I, who have known her for eighteen or nineteen years at least. Then you jump at invitations without ever consulting me, or thinking of how awkward it would be for me to go stumping into a drawing-room all by myself; following my new name, too, which always makes me feel uncomfortable, it is such a sad come-down after Kirkpatrick! And then, when I offer you some of the prettiest things I have got, you say it does not signify how you are dressed. What can I do to please you, Molly?"

I, who delight in nothing more than peace in a family, to see you sitting there with despair upon your face?"

Molly could stand it no longer; she went upstairs to her own room —her own smart new room, which hardly yet seemed a familiar place; and began to cry so heartily and for so long a time, that she stopped at length for very weariness. She thought of Mrs. Hamley wearying for her; of the old Hall whose very quietness might become oppressive to an ailing person; of the trust the squire had had in her that she would come off directly with him. And all this oppressed her much more than the querulousness of her stepmother's words.

CHAPTER XVII.

TROUBLE AT HAMLEY HALL.

If Molly thought that peace dwelt perpetually at Hamley Hall she was sorely mistaken. Something was out of tune in the whole establishment; and, for a very unusual thing, the common irritation seemed to have produced a common bond. All the servants were old in their places, and were told by some one of the family, or gathered, from the unheeded conversation carried on before them, everything that affected master or mistress or either of the young gentlemen. Any one of them could have told Molly that the grievance which lay at the root of everything, was the amount of the bills run up by Osborne at Cambridge, and which, now that all chance of his obtaining a fellowship was over, came pouring down upon the squire. But Molly, confident of being told by Mrs. Hamley herself anything which she wished her to hear, encouraged no confidences from any one else.

She was struck with the change in "madam's" looks as soon as she caught sight of her in the darkened room, lying on the sofa in her dressing-room, all dressed in white, which almost rivalled the white wanness of her face. The squire ushered Molly in with,—

"Here she is at last!" and Molly had scarcely imagined that he had so much variety in the tones of his voice—the beginning of the sentence was spoken in a loud congratulatory manner, while the last words were scarcely audible. He had seen the death-like pallor on his wife's face; but a new sight, and one which had been presented to him gradually enough, but which was now always giving him a fresh shock. It was a lovely tranquil winter's day; every branch and every twig of the trees and shrubs were glittering with drops of the sun-melted hoarfrost; a robin was perched on a holly-bush, piping cheerily; but the blinds were down, and out of Mrs. Hamley's windows nothing of all this was to be seen. There was even a large screen placed between her and the wood-fire, to keep off that cheerful blaze. Mrs. Hamley stretched out one hand to Molly, and held hers firm; with the other she shaded her eyes.

"She is not so well this morning," said the squire, shaking his head. "But never fear, my dear one; here's the doctor's daughter, nearly as good as the doctor himself. Have you had your medicine? Your beef-tea?" he continued, going about on heavy tiptoe and peeping into every empty cup and glass. Then he returned to the sofa; looked at her for a minute or two, and then softly kissed her, and told Molly he would leave her in charge.

As if Mrs. Hamley was afraid of Molly's remarks or questions, she began in her turn a hasty system of interrogatories.

"Now, dear child, tell me all; it's no breach of confidence, for I shan't mention it again, and I shan't be here long. How does it all go on—the new mother, the good resolutions? let me help you if I can. I think with a girl I could have been of use—a mother does not know boys. But tell me anything you like and will; don't be afraid of details."

Even with Molly's small experience of illness she saw how much of restless fever there was in this speech; and instinct, or some such gift, prompted her to tell a long story of many things—the wedding-day, her visit to Miss Brownings', the new furniture, Lady Harriet, &c., all in an easy flow of talk which was very soothing to Mrs. Hamley, inasmuch as it gave her something to think about beyond her own immediate sorrows. But Molly did not speak of her own grievances, nor of the new domestic relationship. Mrs. Hamley noticed this.

"And you and Mrs. Gibson get on happily together?"

"Not always," said Molly. "You know we didn't know much of each other before we were put to live together."

"I didn't like what the squire told me last night. He was very angry."

That sore had not yet healed over; but Molly resolutely kept silence, beating her brains to think of some other subject of conversation.

"Ah! I see, Molly," said Mrs. Hamley; "you won't tell me your sorrows, and yet, perhaps, I could have done you some good."

"I don't like," said Molly, in a low voice. "I think papa wouldn't like it. And, besides, you have helped me so much—you and Mr. Roger Hamley. I often think of the things he said; they come in so usefully, and are such a strength to me."

"Ah, Roger! yes. He is to be trusted. Oh, Molly! I've a great deal to say to you myself, only not now. I must have my medicine and try to go to sleep. Good girl! You are stronger than I am, and can do without sympathy."

Molly was taken to another room; the maid who conducted her told her that Mrs. Hamley had not wished her to have her nights disturbed, as they might very probably have been if she had been in her former sleeping-room. In the afternoon Mrs. Hamley sent for her, and with the want of reticence common to invalids, especially to those suffering from long and depressing maladies, she told Molly of the family distress and disappointment.

She made Molly sit down near her on a little stool, and, holding her hand, and looking into her eyes to catch her spoken sympathy from their expression quicker than she could from her words, she said,—

" Osborne has so disappointed us! I cannot understand it yet. And the squire was so terribly angry! I cannot think how all the money was spent—advances through money-lenders, besides bills. The squire does not show me how angry he is now, because he's afraid of another attack; but I know how angry he is. You see he has been spending ever so much money in reclaiming that land at Upton Common, and is very hard pressed himself. But it would have doubled the value of the estate, and so we never thought anything of economies which would benefit Osborne in the long run. And now the squire says he must mortgage some of the land; and you can't think how it cuts him to the heart. He sold a great deal of timber to send the two boys to college. Osborne—oh! what a dear, innocent boy he was: he was the heir, you know; and he was so clever, every one said he was sure of honours and a fellowship, and I don't know what all; and he did get a scholarship, and then all went wrong. I don't know how. That is the worst. Perhaps the squire wrote too angrily, and that stopped up confidence. But he might have told me. He would have done, I think, Molly, if he had been here, face to face with me. But the squire, in his anger, told him not to show his face at home till he had paid off the debts he had incurred out of his allowance. Out of two hundred and fifty a year to pay off more than nine hundred, one way or another! And not to come home till then! Perhaps Roger will have debts too! He had but two hundred; but, then, he was not the eldest son. The squire has given orders that the men are to be turned off the draining-works; and I lie awake thinking of their poor families this wintry weather. But what shall we do? I've never been strong, and, perhaps, I've been extravagant in my habits; and there were family traditions as to expenditure, and the reclaiming of this land. Oh! Molly, Osborne was such a sweet little baby, and such a loving boy: so clever, too! You know I read you some of his poetry: now, could a person who wrote like that do anything very wrong? And yet I'm afraid he has."

" Don't you know, at all, how the money has gone? " asked Molly.

" No! not at all. That's the sting. There are tailors' bills, and bills for book-binding and wine and pictures—those come to four or five hundred; and though this expenditure is extraordinary—inexplicable to such simple old folk as we are—yet it may be only the luxury of the present day. But the money for which he will give no account,—of which, indeed, we only heard through the squire's London agents, who found out that certain disreputable attorneys were making inquiries as to the entail of the estate;—oh! Molly, worse than all—I don't know how to bring myself to tell you—as to the age and health of the squire, his dear father"—(she began to sob almost hysterically; yet she would go on talking, in spite of Molly's efforts to stop her)—" who held him in his arms, and blessed him, even before I had kissed him; and thought always so much of him as his

heir and first-born darling. How he has loved him! How I have loved him! I sometimes have thought of late that we've almost done that good Roger injustice."

"No! I'm sure you've not: only look at the way he loves you. Why, you are his first thought: he may not speak about it, but any one may see it. And dear, dear Mrs. Hamley," said Molly, determined to say out all that was in her mind now that she had once got the word, "don't you think that it would be better not to misjudge Mr. Osborne Hamley? We don't know what he has done with the money: he is so good (is he not?) that he may have wanted it to relieve some poor person—some tradesman, for instance, pressed by creditors—some ——"

"You forget, dear," said Mrs. Hamley, smiling a little at the girl's impetuous romance, but sighing the next instant, "that all the other bills come from tradesmen, who complain piteously of being kept out of their money."

Molly was nonplussed for the moment; but then she said,—

"I daresay they imposed upon him. I'm sure I've heard stories of young men being made regular victims of by the shopkeepers in great towns."

"You're a great darling, child," said Mrs. Hamley, comforted by Molly's strong partisanship, unreasonable and ignorant though it was.

"And, besides," continued Molly, "some one must be acting wrongly in Osborne's—Mr. Osborne Hamley's, I mean—I can't help saying Osborne sometimes, but, indeed, I always think of him as Mr. Osborne ——"

"Never mind, Molly, what you call him; only go on talking. It seems to do me good to hear the hopeful side taken. The squire has been so hurt and displeased: strange-looking men coming into the neighbourhood, too, questioning the tenants, and grumbling about the last fall of timber, as if they were calculating on the squire's death."

"That's just what I was going to speak about. Doesn't it show that they are bad men? and would bad men scruple to impose upon him, and to tell lies in his name, and to ruin him?"

"Don't you see, you only make him out weak, instead of wicked?"

"Yes; perhaps I do. But I don't think he is weak. You know yourself, dear Mrs. Hamley, how very clever he really is. Besides, I would rather he was weak than wicked. Weak people may find themselves all at once strong in heaven, when they see things quite clearly; but I don't think the wicked will turn themselves into virtuous people all at once."

"I think I've been very weak, Molly," said Mrs. Hamley, stroking Molly's curls affectionately. "I've made such an idol of my beautiful Osborne; and he turns out to have feet of clay, not strong enough to stand firm on the ground. And that's the best view of his conduct, too!"

What with his anger against his son, and his anxiety about his wife: the difficulty of raising the money immediately required, and his invita-

tion at the scarce-concealed inquiries made by strangers as to the value of his property, the poor squire was in a sad state. He was angry and impatient with every one who came near him; and then was depressed at his own violent temper and injurful words. The old servants, who, perhaps, cheated him in many small things, were beautifully patient under his upbraiding. They could understand bursts of passion, and knew the cause of his variable moods as well as he did himself. The butler, who was accustomed to argue with his master about every fresh direction as to his work, now nudged Molly at dinner-time to make her eat of some dish which she had just been declining, and explained his conduct afterwards as follows,—

“ You see, miss, me and cook had planned a dinner as would tempt master to eat; but when you say, ‘ No, thank you,’ when I hand you anything, master never so much as looks at it. But if you take a thing, and eats with a relish, why first he waits, and then he looks, and by and by he smells; and then he finds out as he’s hungry, and falls to eating as natural as a kitten takes to mewing. That’s the reason, miss, as I gave you a nudge and a wink, which no one knows better nor me was not manners.”

Osborne’s name was never mentioned during these *tête-à-tête* meals. The squire asked Molly questions about Hollingford people, but did not seem much to attend to her answers. He used also to ask her every day how she thought that his wife was; but if Molly told the truth—that every day seemed to make her weaker and weaker—he was almost savage with the girl. He could not bear it; and he would not. Nay, once he was on the point of dismissing Mr. Gibson because he insisted on a consultation with Dr. Nicholls, the great physician of the county.

“ It’s nonsense thinking her so ill as that—you know it’s only the delicacy she’s had for years; and if you can’t do her any good in such a simple case—no pain—only weakness and nervousness—it is a simple case, eh?—don’t look in that puzzled way, man!—you’d better give her up altogether, and I’ll take her to Bath or Brighton, or somewhere for change, for in my opinion it’s only moping and nervousness.”

But the squire’s bluff florid face was pinched with anxiety, and worn with the effort of being deaf to the footsteps of fate as he said these words which belied his fears.

Mr. Gibson replied very quietly,—

“ I shall go on coming to see her, and I know you will not forbid my visits. But I shall bring Dr. Nicholls with me the next time I come. I may be mistaken in my treatment; and I wish to God he may say I am mistaken in my apprehensions.”

“ Don’t tell me them! I cannot bear them!” cried the squire. “ Of course we must all die; and she must too. But not the cleverest doctor in England shall go about coolly meting out the life of such as her. I dare say I shall die first. I hope I shall. But I’ll knock any one down who speaks to me of death sitting within me. And, besides, I think all

doctors are ignorant quacks, pretending to knowledge they haven't got. Ay, you may smile at me. I don't care. Unless you can tell me I shall die first, neither you nor your Dr. Nicholls shall come prophesying and croaking about this house."

Mr. Gibson went away, heavy at heart at the thought of Mrs. Hamley's approaching death, but thinking little enough of the squire's speeches. He had almost forgotten them, in fact, when about nine o'clock that evening, a groom rode in from Hamley Hall in hot haste, with a note from the squire.

DEAR GIBSON,—For God's sake forgive me if I was rude to-day. She is much worse. Come and spend the night here. Write for Nicholls, and all the physicians you want. Write before you start off here. They may give her ease. There were Whitworth doctors much talked of in my youth for curing people given up by the regular doctors; can't you get one of them? I put myself in your hands. Sometimes I think it is the turning point, and she'll rally after this bout. I trust all to you.

Yours ever,

P.S.—Molly is a treasure.—God help me!

R. HAMLEY.

Of course Mr. Gibson went; for the first time since his marriage cutting short Mrs. Gibson's querulous lamentations over her life, as involved in that of a doctor called out at all hours of day and night.

He brought Mrs. Hamley through this attack; and for a day or two the squire's alarm and gratitude made him docile in Mr. Gibson's hands. Then he returned to the idea of its being a crisis through which his wife had passed; and that she was now on the way to recovery. But the day after the consultation with Dr. Nicholls, Mr. Gibson said to Molly,—

"Molly! I've written to Osborne and Roger. Do you know Osborne's address?"

"No, papa. He's in disgrace. I don't know if the squire knows; and she has been too ill to write."

"Never mind. I'll enclose it to Roger; whatever those lads may be to others, there's a strong brotherly love as ever I saw, between the two. Roger will know. And, Molly, they are sure to come home as soon as they hear my report of their mother's state. I wish you'd tell the squire what I've done. It's not a pleasant piece of work; and I'll tell madam myself in my own way. I'd have told him if he'd been at home; but you say he was obliged to go to Ashcombe on business."

"Quite obliged. He was so sorry to miss you. But, papa, he will be so angry! You don't know how mad he is against Osborne."

Molly dreaded the squire's anger when she gave him her father's message. She had seen quite enough of the domestic relations of the Hamley family to understand that, underneath his old-fashioned courtesy, and the pleasant hospitality he showed to her as a guest, there was a strong will, and a vehement passionate temper, along with that degree of obstinacy in prejudices (or "opinions," as he would have called them) so common to those who have, neither in youth nor in manhood, mixed largely with their kind. She had listened, day after day, to Mrs. Hamley's

plaintive murmurs as to the deep disgrace in which Osborne was being held by his father—the prohibition of his coming home; and she hardly knew how to begin to tell him that the letter summoning Osborne had already been sent off.

Their dinners were tête-à-tête. The squire tried to make them pleasant to Molly, feeling deeply grateful to her for the soothing comfort she was to his wife. He made merry speeches, which sank away into silence, and at which they each forgot to smile. He ordered up rare wines, which she did not care for, but tasted out of complaisance. He noticed that one day she had eaten some brown beurré pears as if she liked them ; and as his trees had not produced many this year, he gave directions that this particular kind should be sought for through the neighbourhood. Molly felt that, in many ways, he was full of good-will towards her; but it did not diminish her dread of touching on the one sore point in the family. However, it had to be done, and that without delay.

The great log was placed on the after-dinner fire, the hearth swept up, the ponderous candles snuffed, and then the door was shut, and Molly and the squire were left to their dessert. She sat at the side of the table in her old place. That at the head was vacant; yet as no orders had been given to the contrary, the plate and glasses and napkin were always arranged as regularly and methodically as if Mrs. Hamley would come in as usual. Indeed, sometimes, when the door by which she used to enter was opened by any chance, Molly caught herself looking round as if she expected to see the tall, languid figure in the elegant draperies of rich silk and soft lace, which Mrs. Hamley was wont to wear of an evening.

This evening, it struck her, as a new thought of pain, that into that room she would come no more. She had fixed to give her father's message at this very point of time; but something in her throat choked her, and she hardly knew how to govern her voice. The squire got up and went to the broad fire-place, to strike into the middle of the great log, and split it up into blazing, sparkling pieces. His back was towards her. Molly began, "When papa was here to-day, he bade me tell you he had written to Mr. Roger Haunley to say that—that he thought he had better come home; and he enclosed a letter to Mr. Osborne Hamley to say the same thing."

The squire put down the poker, but he still kept his back to Molly.

"He sent for Osborne and Roger?" he asked, at length.

Molly answered, "Yea."

Then there was a dead silence, which Molly thought would never end. The squire had placed his two hands on the high chimney-piece, and stood leaning over the fire.

"Roger would have been down from Cambridge on the 18th," said he. "And he has sent for Osborne, too! Did he know?"—he continued, turning round to Molly, with something of the fierceness she had anticipated in voice and look. In another moment he had dropped his voice. "It is right, quite right. I understand. It has come at length. Come!

come ! Osborne has brought it on, though," with a fresh access of anger in his tones. "She might have" (some word Molly could not hear—she thought it sounded like "lingered") "but for that. I cannot forgive him; I cannot."

And then he suddenly left the room. While Molly sat there still, very sad in her sympathy with all, he put his head in again,—

"Go to her, my dear; I cannot—not just yet. But I will soon. Just this bit; and after that I won't lose a moment. You are a good girl. God bless you!"

It is not to be supposed that Molly had remained all this time at the hall without interruption. Once or twice her father had brought her a summons home. Molly thought she could perceive that he had brought it unwillingly; in fact, it was Mrs. Gibson that had sent for her, almost, as it were, to preserve a "right of way" through her actions.

"You shall come back to-morrow, or the next day," her father had said. "But mamma seems to think people will put a bad construction on your being so much away from home so soon after our marriage."

"Oh, papa, I'm afraid Mrs. Hamley will miss me! I do so like being with her."

"I don't think it is likely she will miss you as much as she would have done a month or two ago. She sleeps so much now, that she is scarcely conscious of the lapse of time. I'll see that you come back here again in a day or two."

So out of the silence and the soft melancholy of the Hall Molly returned into the all-pervading element of chatter and gossip at Hollingsford. Mrs. Gibson received her kindly enough. Once she had a smart new winter bonnet ready to give her as a present; but she did not care to hear any particulars about the friends whom Molly had just left; and her few remarks on the state of affairs at the Hall jarred terribly on the sensitive Molly.

"What a time she lingers! Your papa never expected she would last half so long after that attack. It must be very wearing work to them all. I declare you look quite another creature since you were there. One can only wish it mayn't last, for their sakes."

"You don't know how the squire values every minute," said Molly.

"Why, you say she sleeps a great deal, and doesn't talk much when she's awake, and there's not the slightest hope for her. And yet, at such times, people are kept on the tenter-hooks with watching and waiting. I know it by my dear Kirkpatrick. There really were days when I thought it never would end. But we won't talk any more of such dismal things; you've had quite enough of them, I'm sure, and it always makes me melancholy to hear of illness and death; and yet your papa seems sometimes as if he could talk of nothing else. I'm going to take you out to-night, though, and that will give you something of a change; and I've been getting Miss Rose to trim up one of my old gowns for you; it's too tight for me. There's some talk of dancing,—it's at Mrs. Edward's."

"Oh, mamma, I cannot go!" cried Molly. "I've been so much with her; and she may be suffering so, or even dying—and I to be dancing!"

"Nonsense! You're no relation, so you need not feel it so much. I wouldn't urge you, if she was likely to know about it and be hurt; but as it is, it's all fixed that you are to go; and don't let us have any nonsense about it. We might sit twirling our thumbs, and repeating hymns all our lives long, if we were to do nothing else when people were dying."

"I cannot go," repeated Molly. And, acting upon impulse, and almost to her own surprise, she appealed to her father, who came into the room at this very time. He contracted his dark eyebrows, and looked annoyed as both wife and daughter poured their different sides of the argument into his ears. He sat down in desperation of patience. When his turn came to pronounce a decision, he said,—

"I suppose I can have some lunch? I went away at six this morning, and there's nothing in the dining-room. I have to go off again directly."

Molly started to the door; Mrs. Gibson made haste to ring the bell.

"Where are you going, Molly?" said she, sharply.

"Only to see about papa's lunch."

"There are servants to do it; and I don't like your going into the kitchen."

"Come, Molly! sit down and be quiet," said her father. "One comes home wanting peace and quietness—and food too. If I am to be appealed to, which I beg I may not be another time, I settle that Molly stops at home this evening. I shall come back late and tired. See that I have something ready to eat, goosey, and then I'll dress myself up in my best, and go and fetch you home, my dear. I wish all these wedding festivities were well over. Ready, is it? Then I'll go into the dining-room and gorge myself. A doctor ought to be able to eat like a camel, or like Major Dugald Dalgetty."

It was well for Molly that callers came in just at this time, for Mrs. Gibson was extremely annoyed. They told her some little local piece of news, however, which filled up her mind; and Molly found that, if she only expressed wonder enough at the engagement they had both heard of from the departed callers, the previous discussion as to her accompanying her stepmother or not might be entirely passed over. Not entirely though; for the next morning she had to listen to a very brilliantly touched-up account of the dance and the gaiety which she had missed; and also to be told that Mrs. Gibson had changed her mind about giving her the gown, and thought now that she should reserve it for Cynthia, if only it was long enough; but Cynthia was so tall—quite overgrown, in fact. The chances seemed equally balanced as to whether Molly might not have the gown after all.

The Story of my Escape from Futtehghur.



S the object of the following pages is limited to a narrative of personal adventure, I shall forbear any discussion on the origin and progress of the great Mutiny of the Native Indian army in 1857, and shall strictly confine myself to a relation of facts connected with the outbreak at Futtehghur, and my own providential escape from its fatal consequences. But before proceeding with the narrative, I may briefly notice the infatuation exhibited by the European residents in neglecting to remove their wives and families to a place of refuge, before the rapid spread

of the insurrection, under the mistaken notion that such a show of confidence might avert the threatened danger, and eventually save Futtehghur. Subsequent events, however, soon dispelled this illusion, and left them unprepared for the emergency when their best energies were required to meet it. In the confusion which followed, no two persons were found to concur in a scheme either for defence or escape; and this utter absence of concert undoubtedly contributed to the success of the insurgents, and to the dire fate of their innocent victims. Nor were any capable of acting for themselves: non-officials naturally looked up to the authorities, and subordinates to their superiors, for decision and action; but as the civil and military were divided in opinion, neither would accept the responsibility of acting singly. In this state of disunion and confusion, surrounded by imminent peril, people were driven to the most deplorable condition of terror—till at length the instinct of self-preservation led them to take to boats on the Ganges, in order to be prepared to drop down the river to Cawnpore at a moment's notice. That, indeed, had now become the only available chance of escape, as all the roads leading to Agra, Meerut, &c. had long been closed, and were, moreover, infested by bands of rebels and dacoits, who made no distinction between friend and foe.

On the 4th of June intelligence of the mutiny of the 9th N. I. at Allyghur reached the station, and the announcement that they were

marching towards Futtelghur to induce the 10th Regiment to fraternize with them drove people to the boats, there to await the further issue of events. At nightfall still more alarming rumours were circulated through the bazar, and the budmashes, who were ripe for mischief, added to the general dismay by firing matchlocks in every direction, the discharges rapidly increasing as these signals were taken up from village to village. The natives were worked up to the highest pitch of excitement, and in the midst of the prevailing tumult the sepoys seized their arms, and brought matters to a crisis by downright mutiny. *Sauve qui peut* was now the order of the day, or rather of the night, and one by one, as the preconcerted signal was communicated from boat to boat, did the little fleet move on, in ominous gloom, in the delusive hope of finding a safe haven at Cawnpore.

Scarcely had ten miles of the voyage been accomplished when we were beset with difficulties and dangers altogether unforeseen. Villages hitherto peaceful had risen in arms, and under the impression that we carried our valuables with us determined to oppose our onward progress. At Koosoomkhore, a large village occupying a commanding position on the right bank of the Ganges, and inhabited by a mixed population of Hindoos and Mohammedans, we were met with a shower of matchlock and jingal balls, and peremptorily called upon to surrender under threat of annihilation ; but the guard of matchlockmen, who had been provided as our escort by Hurdeobuksh, a powerful zemindar of Oude, together with our own sporting rifles and guns, answered the salute by a brisk fire, and we rapidly pulled past the place without sustaining any serious damage. Reasonably judging, however, that this adventure was the mere prelude to more dangers, and acting under the advice of Hurdeobuksh's men, we put to shore in order to confer on the advisability of continuing the voyage, or of accepting Hurdeobuksh's protection until a more favourable opportunity offered for prosecuting it.

The numerous instances of treachery which had come to our knowledge since the outbreak of the mutiny had greatly shaken our confidence in the friendly professions of the natives, and made us cautious how we placed ourselves within their power. In the present case few among our number were disposed to lend an ear to their proposal, the majority regarding the offer as a pretext to ensnare the entire party. Only forty, indeed, out of upwards of two hundred souls, eventually accepted the protection offered by Hurdeobuksh, who had now arrived in person ; and while the party of which I formed one prepared to quit the Ramgunga, the other resolved to risk the chance of proceeding to Cawnpore in spite of the friendly remonstrances and warnings of Hurdeobuksh and his people. Their deplorable fate may be summed up, by anticipation, in a few words. After encountering a series of dangers and trials for seven or eight days, the doomed band hove in sight of Cawnpore, and on hearing the booming of heavy siege guns, which painfully betrayed their critical position, sought shelter on an adjacent island. They now learned, to

their increased dismay, that the bridge of boats which spanned the river was occupied by the rebels, whereby the only chance of escape to Allahabad was completely cut off. Next day the fugitives were discovered and attacked by a large force of sepoyas, and compelled to surrender without offering any resistance. No sooner, however, had they surrendered their arms, than, contrary to the solemn assurances of the Nana that their lives should be spared, the men were forthwith separated from the women, and cruelly shot in the presence of their wives and families, the latter being subsequently led away to suffer a still more shocking fate at the hands of their captors. The poor helpless creatures were placed in carts and driven into Cawnpore, where it is known that these fiends perpetrated their brutal massacre in the presence of the very garrison whose protection they had fled to seek. Thus perished every soul of that unhappy party, which constituted the bulk of the European community at Futtéhghur, comprising missionaries, indigo-planters, government clerks, tradesmen, &c., while greater troubles and a similar fate were reserved for us—with two solitary exceptions—who for the time being had escaped the vengeance of the insurgents.

After two days' towing, those who had availed themselves of Hurdeo-buksh's protection, about forty persons in all, among whom were Colonel Tucker, three officers of the 10th N. I., Mr. Thornhill, judge of Futtéhghur, Mr. Probyn, magistrate, my brother (an indigo-planter), and myself, together with their families, reached a dilapidated old building which they called a *ghurree*, or fort, situated in the midst of a jungle. To our extreme mortification, neither the exterior nor the interior of the place offered any facilities for defence. Contrary, however, to all expectation, after the arrival of three officers who had joined our fleet the day following our departure from the station, and who had reported the mutiny of the 10th N. I., we were greeted with the welcome tidings that the sepoyas had remained staunch. The details which subsequently transpired were to the effect that, during the terrible excitement on the night of the 4th of June, when the 9th Regiment was momentarily expected to enter Futtéhghur, the 10th rose in anticipation, seized the treasure, and threatened the lives of the officers. But the devoted gallantry of Colonel Smith, the commandant, and of Captain Vibart of the 2nd Cavalry, who had been detained at the station on account of the mutiny, and who served as a volunteer under the colonel, eventually succeeded in quelling the disturbance and in bringing back the sepoyas to their duty. Meanwhile the 9th, who had probably received conflicting reports of the conduct of the 10th, and whose sincerity they doubted, regarding them as outcasts because they had crossed the sea on a voyage to and from Burmah, prudently departed from the vicinity of Futtéhghur to join the rendezvous of the rebels at Delhi.

This intelligence was reassuring, and in the joy of the moment we forgot all our anxieties. Probyn and the three officers of the 10th immediately prepared to return to the station, the latter to rejoin their regiment,

and the former to ascertain the real state of affairs before removing the ladies and children from the *ghurree*, which, untenable as it appeared, was nevertheless considered a safer place of refuge than a station garrisoned by doubtful troops. During the absence of Probyn—who from his position and friendship with Hurdeobuksh was regarded as the head of the party,—much dissatisfaction was felt with the miserable accommodation of the fort. This, coupled with the favourable accounts which came from Futterghur, induced us to decide on returning to the station without the knowledge of Probyn, who unexpectedly rejoined us and was amazed to find that we were prepared to leave Hurdeobuksh's protection. In vain he expostulated on the rashness of the move; in vain he pointed out the risk of placing any reliance on the promises of the sepoys, who since their late mutinous conduct had renewed the oath of allegiance on the condition that they should not be called upon to act against their comrades. Resolved, however, not to place his own family in jeopardy, Probyn resigned himself to the promised protection of Hurdeobuksh, and was joined therein by Mr. Edwards, a fugitive from Budaon, who had arrived a day or two before.

On reaching Futterghur we found affairs wearing a much more satisfactory aspect than we had been led to anticipate; our spirits were revived, and we began to indulge the hope that, in spite of Probyn's gloomy forebodings, we should weather the storm which was agitating every part of that vast empire. Our fears, however, had been barely lulled into repose, when all sense of security suddenly vanished at the intelligence that the 41st N. I. intended visiting Futterghur on their way to Delhi. (This corps had already murdered their own officers, and plundered Shahjehanpore.) Every precaution was immediately taken to prevent the rebels from crossing the Ganges: the bridge of boats was destroyed, as also every detached boat within several miles on either side of the river. To a casual observer, the sepoy displayed genuine alacrity in this service; but those experienced in native character saw, in this very circumstance, the withering of all their hopes. Two days passed in profound suspense; on the third our worst fears were terribly realized. On the memorable 18th of June, the 41st, after performing a circuitous journey, crossed the river and entered Furrukabad, where they raised the standard of rebellion, and proclaimed the Nawab Tuffuzul Hoosain Khan ruler of the province. The 10th, who had been in communication with them whilst deceiving us with a display of zealous loyalty, anxious to secure the treasure which they had retained since the 4th of June, warned off their officers, and plundered the money before the 41st could arrive to claim a share. They next proceeded to liberate the gaol prisoners, offering us no molestation, but leaving us completely at the mercy of the invaders and the fanatic rabble of the Nawab.

At daybreak of the morning above mentioned, when most of us lay slumbering in the open within the fort on the bank of the river, where we were in the habit of meeting since our return from Hurdeobuksh's, an

officer arrived almost breathless from the sepoy lines, with a countenance which betrayed the utmost consternation, and announced the direful news that the 10th had mutinied. The alarm produced defies description. We were at the time in presence of a strong detachment of the regiment, which garrisoned the fort; and therefore our movements were paralyzed: we were reduced to utter helplessness. Contrary to all expectations, the men began to leave the fort in small numbers, and in a few minutes the entire body departed, leaving us in sole possession. Not a moment was lost in taking measures to protect the ladies and children, whom it was impossible, with our small numbers, to escort to Agra or to any other place of safety. We were now joined by Colonel Smith, who at the imminent peril of his life had used every effort to recall his men to a sense of their duty, exposing himself with reckless bravery to an infuriated soldiery in open and armed rebellion. He came accompanied by three or four of his most attached men, who stood around him sobbing like children. They implored permission to remain with him, but yielding at length to the colonel's wishes, they mournfully departed. The gates were now closed, and a 24-pounder howitzer charged with bags of scrap-metal was hurriedly drawn into position to guard the passage. The garrison, consisting of thirty-five men, young and old, was then mustered and divided into three bodies, under the command of Colonels Goldie, Smith, and Tucker, and measures were immediately adopted to render the post defensible.

Before proceeding with my narrative, I shall attempt to convey a general idea of the nature and extent of this fort. Futtehghur, the Fort of Victory, from which the European station takes its name, is situated on the right bank of the Ganges, on a bend of the river, about three miles distant from Furrukabad. It is a quadrilateral mud building, defended by a dozen or more semicircular bastions thrown out before the angles and faces. The walls rise about fifteen feet above the ground level, averaging from nine to ten feet in thickness, surmounted on three sides by a dry ditch, and on the fourth by the Ganges. The enclosed area measures from fifteen to twenty acres, the whole of which was occupied by the workshops of the Gun-carriage Agency, the residences of the agent and engineer, and a small graveyard. The old fort had long been dismantled of its armament, and deprived of all pretence of fortification save the bastions and breastworks. The difficulty, under our circumstances, of rendering a place of such formidable dimensions defensible, may readily be imagined. Suffice it to say, that we mounted sham guns on several of the bastions, and dragged up a few of the lighter field-pieces, which were discovered in the Model Room, and placed them in newly-cut embrasures in the most commanding positions. In lieu of regular charges, a few rounds were improvised out of some blank musket-cartridges, while scrap-iron wrapped in canvas-bags served for grape, and sledge-hammers for round-shot. The above, together with some seven or eight thousand rounds of musket ammunition, constituted our entire magazine, with which we prepared to

defend ourselves, as no hope could be entertained of receiving succour either from Agra, Meerut, or Cawnpore.

Whether through ignorance of our numerical strength, or through fear of risking an attack against Englishmen occupying what may have appeared to them a strong position, the 41st and their allies did not venture on an advance for several days, but employed the interval in concentrating their forces, and in making vast preparations to annihilate us at a stroke. Meanwhile threats and promises were alternately made to induce us to surrender; but their treachery was too palpable and their ultimate object too obvious to admit of negotiation. The time, thus wasted by them in abortive schemes to delude their intended victims, was devoted by us to the strengthening of our position, and we moreover succeeded in obtaining a supply of provisions from an adjacent village. It was while we were busily employed in demolishing some houses and walls which interfered with the action of our guns, that the enemy made their first hostile movement by sending a strong party of sepoys, who drove off our coolies and occupied the position.

On the 26th of June, the day following, while it was yet dark, the enemy advanced in full force and commenced the attack with a discharge of artillery. The sudden booming of the guns and whizzing of the shot wide over our heads startled all sleepers, and sent them to their posts, painfully harassed with a sense of inevitable doom. None, indeed, could entertain the hope of surviving that day against such fearful odds, provided, as it was said they were, with fifty scaling-ladders, and bent on a simultaneous assault from every available quarter, whilst we could only spare one or two men for each of the flank bastions, and five or six for the angles and other weak points. After wasting some twenty rounds in the dark, the rebels ceased firing, but at daybreak resumed their work. The ladders were now hurried forward, covered by skirmishers, and the scene was enlivened by the cavalry, which trotted briskly on and occupied the roads on the flanks. "Reserve your fire and be careful of your ammunition," was the order passed round to the posts as the sharp rattle of musketry rent the air and chilled our blood. On they came, yelling and gesticulating, and emboldened by our reserve dashed forward in the hope of securing the ground before we could make any effectual resistance. But they were mistaken; our guns opened fire, and our musketry began to play with good effect on the scaling parties, who dropped their unwieldy burdens and fled, after a few abortive attempts to use them on points from which our fire was temporarily diverted. We were not so fortunate, however, in another direction, for the enemy soon discovered our weakest points, and succeeded in placing three ladders against a single bastion, where they as nearly as possible obtained a footing. Happily the ladders proved a few feet too short, but the swords of the assailants, glittering in the sunshine, betrayed our danger, and in a moment we hurled upon them the huge logs of timber which had been piled to raise the breastwork, completing the repulse by a few discharges

of shot, and taking possession of the ladders. The contest had raged with unabated fury for two hours, when the enemy began to waver. Shortly after they withdrew, leaving a number of their dead scattered in all directions.

The attack was resumed in the afternoon, but the failure of the morning had damped the ardour of the assailants, and we found much less difficulty in withstanding it. As their attempts against the fort became more and more feeble, so our hopes began to revive. The intelligence brought by our spies tended to confirm this hope, for discontent was ripe among them, and desertions numerous. Our casualties thus far were trifling, notwithstanding the incessant fire maintained against us night and day, allowing us no intervals of peace, and forbidding sleep, except in snatches, under fatigue and exposure; but our spirits were buoyant, and the favourable aspect of affairs enabled us to endure these trials cheerily. Unhappily for us, the Nawab of Furrukabad—who was personally interested in the expulsion of the English, the stability of his Nawabdom depending on it—observing that the courage of the sepoys began to flag, summoned to their aid the Pathans of Shumshabad, Mhow, and other places; and after exciting a spirit of rivalry between the different parties, and stimulating them by the promise of a lac of rupees to the captors, sent the whole body against us.

Thus reinforced by a host of fanatical Mussulmans accustomed from infancy to the exercise of arms, with the prospect of a splendid prize and rich booty before them, the combined rebels advanced to the attack confident of success, conducting their operations much more systematically than before. In the first place, all the losty houses of the village adjoining the fort, and commanding the interior of our positions, were occupied by the rifle companies of the 41st, and, whilst our attention was directed to the manœuvres of the artillery and cavalry, the assaulting-parties, composed mainly of Pathans, and led by a daring fanatic, rushed to the ladders. Seizing these, they pressed forward to the defences, heedless for a while of the havoc which our musketry made among them, but eventually giving way and retiring in the utmost confusion. The encounter was a severe one, and but for the supply of six or eight muskets which each of us kept ready primed and loaded for instant use, it is very doubtful whether we could have checked the determined onset of a force sixty times superior to our own. However, after a sharp conflict of two hours, we had the satisfaction of seeing the assailants retire under cover. The riflemen had done considerable mischief, and rendered several of our posts untenable; nearly all our ammunition was expended, which rendered us incapable of effectual retaliation; and, to add to these drawbacks, several of our best men had been placed *hors de combat*. Nevertheless, we had stubbornly held our own, and, in spite of the overwhelming odds against us, had been invariably successful in repulsing the rebels, till at length they seem to have come to the conclusion that a change of tactics was necessary, and that more insidious measures must be used in order to

place the fort in their hands. To effect this without exciting our suspicion, the usual assaults were continued daily, but in the form of feints, and the alarms were doubled during the night to keep us ever on the alert, and thereby to weary out our posts.: Meanwhile, their designs were being carried out in the dark; approaches were stealthily cut, whereby they obtained a footing in an adjacent wood-yard, the walls of which they easily perforated. Then swarming within in hundreds they attacked the fort walls, baffling all our efforts to dislodge them. Captain Vibart volunteered with two or three others to lead a night sortie against them ; but the feebleness of our numbers forbade such a sacrifice, and Colonel Smith could not be induced to sanction the attempt. A more happy suggestion to fire the wood in the yard was carried out with signal success. A thatched sentry-box was immediately taken down, besmeared with coal-tar, ignited, and thrown on the heaps of fire-wood below. In the course of half-an-hour the whole was in a blaze, and the hissing flames reaching the logs which had been piled to raise the breastwork, nearly drove the picket from its position. During the conflagration, which lasted twenty-four hours, and smouldered till the end of our tenure, several unfinished mines exploded, and sent up dense volumes of smoke, betraying at once the secret tactics of the enemy. Defeated in a plan which promised easy and certain success, the rebels fell back greatly disheartened; but the safe subterranean passage suggested that the scheme might be carried out in a more accessible part, and eagerly availing themselves of the idea, they worked their way to the foundations of the fort, protected by shot-proof sheet-iron and bales of cotton, and in the course of the night constructed a mine, which they exploded before daybreak the following morning with terrific effect. The shock caused the fort to vibrate to its very base, sending an indescribable chill through every heart, and a moment after the scene became one of the wildest excitement.

Shortly before the explosion I had retired under shelter of a waggon to snatch a few moments of sleep after the night watching, leaving the look-out to a faithful native servant of my poor brother (who had fallen the preceding day), bidding him to rouse me if he noticed any movement of the enemy. I had barely stretched myself on the ground when Bhyro called me to my post at the loophole. A small smouldering fire was all that was visible through the darkness. Presently the brightness increased, and ere I had time to conjecture its purport, the thunder of the explosion stunned my senses. Rifle in hand, I hastened to the breach, half-frantic with rage and despair. The smoke and dust, coupled with the dusk of the morning, made everything look hazy, and it was some minutes before I could discern the figure of the Rev. Mr. Fisher and one or two others silently moving up the 3-pounder to cover the breach. A few words of inquiry, hastily exchanged, enabled us to ascertain that the picket had sustained no injury, and, leaving them to defend the gap, I hastened back to my post at the loophole, with Bhyro at my elbow. Nothing was discernible in the darkness below. Presently a sharp rattle of musketry from

the corner bastion announced the approach of the storming-party, and shortly after a moving mass, and occasionally the glitter of a polished sword, became dimly visible in the ditch, advancing cautiously towards the breach. Previous to the discovery, I had wasted several precious rounds of ammunition on a spade and pickaxe, which were mistaken for a crouching enemy; now my attention was directed to the advancing body creeping up silently within sixty yards of my post. Instantly the rifle was lowered, both barrels discharged, then the muskets and a double gun as rapidly as possible, each being handed to Bhyro to reload. At this crisis I was joined by Mr. David Churcher, but I merely allowed him a momentary peep at the assembled masses below, and then hurried him off to give the alarm, and to bring as many as he could from the disengaged bastion. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour he returned with two others, just as I was becoming faint and exhausted. Both shoulders were extremely sore, and I was no longer capable of bearing the pressure and recoil of the fouled muskets. In this state I resigned the post, and a few moments later had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy fall into confusion and retire, leaving heaps of their dead and dying within a few yards of the breach.

Our casualties up to this period of the siege amounted to one native and three Europeans killed and six or seven wounded. My unfortunate brother was the first European victim. He fell mortally wounded in the head by a rifle-ball, and was carried down the ramparts insensible and dying. Colonel Tucker, who filled the vacancy, shared the same fate twenty-four hours after, and both were laid in one grave at nightfall. Conductor Ahern, the only artilleryman among us, followed them two days later, and found a resting-place by their side. The number may appear insignificant, but it should be remembered that the entire garrison consisted of thirty-five men, two or three of them aged and infirm, and the loss estimated accordingly. Moreover, the efficiency of the survivors was seriously reduced by fatigue and constant exposure to a tropical sun during the hottest season of the year; besides which, our supplies of ammunition were nearly exhausted. It will not, therefore, be a matter of surprise that the last affair cast a gloom over our party. It became manifest now that we could not contend much longer against such overwhelming odds; yet not a murmur was uttered. Patient submission to the Divine will, and a fixed determination to fight to the last, was the firm resolve of every man.

At noon, when all was silence in the fierce heat of the day, except the sharp crack of the enemy's rifles which knew no cessation, a second assault was attempted and gallantly repulsed by the intrepidity and presence of mind of the Rev. Mr. Fisher, who, single-handed, met the leader of the party as he dashed up the breach, calling lustily for his men to follow him. The moment was a critical one, but our worthy chaplain was equal to the emergency, and boldly did he meet it. Rising on his feet he deliberately shot the chief through the heart, and then waited for

his followers to succeed him. But none came ; the fate of the sirdar had checked the advance, and the party precipitately retired without firing a single shot. They had, doubtless, surmised that the entire picket was on the alert, whereas, with the exception of Mr. Fisher, the men were all taking a meal beneath the shade of some trees close under the bastion.

Unsuccessful in forcing a passage through the breach, and seemingly impressed with the conviction that it would be no easy task to take the fort by storm, the rebels suffered the afternoon to pass in inaction. But the silence of the night was invaded as usual by the riflemen, and the monotony broken by occasional discharges of artillery and the hum and shouts of a multitude of voices, as if contemplating an assault. The morning dawned, and wore on without any demonstration on the part of the enemy, their marvellous forbearance increasing rather than diminishing the fever of our excitement and suspense. We naturally inferred that some deep-laid scheme was being matured, but could obtain no clue to its immediate object, and again prepared to pass another night in anxious wakefulness. Night, however, revealed what had been a mystery throughout the day. Just as Colonel Smith's relief party lay down to rest on the bare ground, the mining operations of the rebels were distinctly heard beneath the bastion, placing it beyond doubt that they intended to destroy the bastion, and with two practicable breaches failure was impossible. In the morning the working of the miners became still more audible, and the look-out reported seeing men passing and repassing with large supplies of powder, thereby confirming our conjectures, and reducing our situation to one of the utmost peril. Under these critical circumstances it was proposed to fortify the engine-house and workshops; since it was impossible, without men or means, to countermine the enemy; but the impracticability of the suggestion was too obvious to the experienced amongst us ; and the question then arose how the ladies and children were to be rescued from the impending blow. Despondency sat upon every countenance at the thought that such a consummation was hopeless ; nevertheless, the faint chance of effecting their escape to Cawnpore was grasped at, and the desperate alternative resolved on after a brief consultation. Arrangements were accordingly made to have the boats prepared to embark the ladies and children, and to slip cables at a moment's notice.

At midnight, the only three boats left out of a large fleet which was moored by the fort before the outbreak of hostilities were ready to receive their living cargo. By one, at a given signal, the men abandoned the fort, with their arms and ammunition ; and by two, the fortorn party slipped moorings, and dropped down the river. It was a solemn hour : every heart throbbed, and the prayers of the helpless ascended to the Almighty for strength and deliverance—when suddenly, to our great alarm, lest the suspicions of the sepoys should be aroused thereby, the profound silence was broken by the powerful voice of Colonel Gudlie, thrice repeating, "All ready ! " and adding, with redoubled em-

phasis, the command to "Let go!" in a tone so loud that it must have reached the ears of the enemy. One by one the boats moved off, Colonel Smith taking the lead, Colonel Goldie following in the next, and Major Robertson bringing up the rear. The two former were severally provided with a couple of native boatmen, the last was manned exclusively by Europeans. No sooner had the leading boat emerged out of cover of the fort than the hum of voices became distinctly audible, rising gradually to a murmur, and finally developing into a shout as the multitudes flocked to the shore, from whence they assailed us with a shower of bullets and a profusion of imprecations on the accursed Feringhees. The shot rattled fiercely against the bamboos of the roof as I lay thereon stretched at full length, facing the rebels and steering the boat, while the men worked bravely at the oars, which, assisted by the current, soon bore us on the broad bosom of the Ganges beyond musket-range. Strenuously we laboured, hoping ere morning dawn to be many miles removed from the pursuing foe; but disappointment again awaited us. The river had barely risen sufficiently high to help us over the numerous sandbanks which obstructed the passage, and our mismanagement brought us into difficulties which eventually proved our ruin. To avoid the fire of the sepoyas we abandoned the main channel and followed a branch, when progress became painfully tedious. We were, however, safe against molestation, and by dint of perseverance might have got out of harm's way, but for the treacherous conduct of Colonel Goldie's boatmen, who landed at a village and betrayed us—the villagers turning out with their matchlocks to intercept and plunder us. In our hurry to get clear, the unwieldy boat ran aground, exposing us to the fire of the rabble; and the sepoyas on the opposite shore, perceiving our predicament, brought their guns to bear on us, and despatched a ferry-boat in pursuit. To escape the imminent danger, we resolved on transferring the party to Colonel Smith's boat, which was the nearest, and abandoning Colonel Goldie's. This was happily effected as the ferry-boat approached within range, and gave us that distance the start of her. The chase was maintained for several hours, and we were progressing favourably, when an untoward accident to Colonel Smith's boat, necessitating repairs, brought us to anchor. The rabble instantly attacked us with their matchlocks, but were kept at bay by our muskets; nevertheless, one of our boatmen fell, shot through the heart while engaged on the repairs, and we hurriedly pushed off to escape a worse fate. The precious time thus lost enabled the sepoyas to gain on us; added to which, our critical position was sorely aggravated by the stranding of Major Robertson's boat on a bar over which Colonel Smith's lighter craft had passed, and was then too far advanced to allow of his men rendering us any assistance.

Thus unintentionally abandoned, we were left to our own feeble resources. All hands instantly mustered in the water, and applying their backs to the boat used every effort to float her; but the fierce current and a strong wind rendered all attempts abortive. The crisis had now

come : yelling like fiends over our misfortune, the rabble assailed us with showers of shot and arrows, and at this juncture two boats, with one individual in each squatting unconcernedly at the helm, but otherwise apparently empty, were observed dropping down the stream. Their inoffensive bearing disarmed all suspicion of any hostile intent, and we pursued our hopeless toil without giving them further notice. The surprise was complete : at twenty yards' distance the boats unmasted, and poured a volley into us, killing and wounding several, and ere we could recover our self-possession the current placed the boats alongside, sending death amongst us at every shot. Resistance was useless, but rather than yield to the savage murderers, our men, on the impulse of the moment, called on their wives and friends to follow them into the water. The summons, however, was unnecessary, for the instant the rebels set foot on board it became the signal for a general rush for the river, into which they fearlessly plunged, calling aloud on the Almighty to succour them. The scene which followed defies description. Groups, locked in each other's arms, besought God aloud, as they disappeared in the stream ; whilst others, who still clung to life, rushed hither and thither in wild despair, in the hope of eluding the fire of the murderers, till, exhausted or shot, they were swept away by the flowing tide. In their insatiable thirst for blood and plunder, the rebels pursued the fugitives breast-deep in the water, shooting and cutting down the stragglers as the current carried them by, accompanying their blows with the foulest invectives. Those who were unencumbered mingled with the assailants in hand-to-hand encounters, and died fighting desperately. For a moment I was bewildered, and knew not how to act, for death appeared in every direction. Suddenly I saw Bhyro come from the side of the boat, holding my brother's only child in his arms, and imploring the mob to spare the innocent girl and her mother, both of whom were severely wounded.

"God help them !" I exclaimed, springing up at the same time into the boat to reach my rifle and revolver ; but they were gone. Hurrying forward, I sought a musket of Fitzgerald, who with his wife and child still lingered in the boat—he unwilling to quit her side, she resolved to die where she lay. Failing in my entreaties, I seized one from the hands of an Eurasian drummer-boy, who was just emerging from beneath the boat, and dashed astern in time to see a powerful sepoy raise the thatch roof of his boat and support it on his arms. A dozen muzzles were simultaneously thrust forward within a yard of my feet, but ere a shot was fired, my musket, without being shouldered to take aim, was discharged at the monster's breast. He fell with a heavy thud, and the roof dropping over his party, left me an interval to reload. I had not time, however, to match a percussion-cap from the cartridge-box before half-a-dozen of the rebels broke through the matted partition, and rushing forward obliged me to retreat. Flying from one side to another in the vain hope of finding a cap, the shots meanwhile rattling through the side, my heart sickened at the sight of the unfortunate wounded and dying, and a chill came over

me at the reflection of the torture and mutilation which awaited them, and of which I too might be the victim. Quick as thought I turned to the water, where it occurred to me that if wounded death would soon terminate all my sufferings ; and plunging in, I seized a gourd which had been carefully reserved by a native for the purpose, and turned it into a buoy. Then, casting a farewell look at the groups struggling in the water, I struck out with all my might till out of range of the shots. The boat which I had left was crowded with sepoyas, who finished their butchery, and were ostentatiously displaying to the multitudes on shore the various articles of value which they had so ruthlessly plundered.

Thankful for deliverance from a merciless enemy with but a trifling flesh-wound on the shoulder, I calmly resigned myself to the will of Providence, and turned on my back to float at ease with the current. Opposite Singheerampore, where I observed Colonel Smith's boat pass through a fiery ordeal of round shot and bullets, I righted my position, when to my astonishment I caught sight of a native swimming a few feet ahead of me, with a bundle of clothes on his head, bound no doubt to the captured boat in quest of booty. Cautiously I gave him a wide berth, determined, if discovered and molested, to grapple with him. But he passed on without noticing me, and I resumed my position on the back, and continued floating down the stream.

Under Singheerampore some straggling shots from the heights attracted my attention, and turning over I was not a little alarmed to see ahead of me a ferry-boat, conveying a load of sepoyas across the river. Darkness, however, had now set in, and by the exercise of a little caution, exposing no more than my nose above water, I managed to elude observation ; and a storm, which had overtaken our boat when aground, now burst out in full force, rendering pursuit impracticable. The consequent swell, however, developed a new source of danger ; but it mattered little to me, for at the time I dared not entertain the remotest hope of finding an asylum among the natives, and my only chance lay in reaching Colonel Smith, who I was convinced, from my experience of the river, would inevitably run aground ere he had got over many miles. Resigned to my fate, I continued struggling on, greatly assisted by the gourd, until strength began to fail me, and I prepared for the final throes. It was whilst breathing a fervent prayer to Heaven that my feet touched the ground, and the discovery filled my heart with the most devout gratitude. I was saved. Greatly refreshed with the rest obtained, I was able to stem the waves more successfully, and noticed that the wind was perceptibly moderating. Half-an-hour later a dark object became visible on the broad bosom of the Ganges reflected against the horizon. "It must be the boat," I exclaimed ; and though reduced to the utmost verge of exhaustion, the welcome sight cheered my drooping spirits, and inspired me with fresh energy. Gradually the outlines became more distinct, and I struck out across the stream in order to gain the branch channel before being carried too far down the bend of the river, and thereby losing the chance of catching

the boat. It was a desperate effort, and the excitement was increased by little fish, attracted by the blood, nibbling at my wound, and by the momentary expectation that an alligator would make an end of me. I felt, indeed, that I had expended the last convulsive remains of strength, and found myself on the point of drowning. The sight of the boat still encouraged me, yet I sank two or three times, the gourd no longer affording the least buoyancy.

But it was the will of God that I should survive. Again did my feet meet the ground, otherwise I had assuredly found a watery grave. Once more on terra firma, I leisurely worked up with the current, walking along with the drift, and hailed the boat at a distance of three hundred yards to assure myself that there was no mistake. No reply came. Convinced, however, of the identity of the craft, I advanced and hailed again. "Come on!" answered Major Munro, in a subdued tone. The muffled accents sounded ominously, and I augured that they had suffered severely from the grape and musketry off Singheerampore. Silently I drew toward the boat.

"How did matters fare with you?" whispered two or three voices, as I stood, perfectly helpless, unable even to lift my arms above my shoulders.

"All, I am afraid, killed," I replied: such being my conviction at the time, as I had not seen a single soul attempt to escape.

"For God's sake mention not a word of it to the ladies! our own disasters have been sad enough," remarked the major; and extending his arms to my assistance he drew me on board.

The gourd which had so materially contributed to save my life was carefully laid aside to be preserved as a souvenir, should Providence carry me through those troublous times, and I then retired to the top of the roof under a drizzling rain. Lighting on a deserted mattress, wet through by the rain, I wrapped myself in its folds, using part as a bed and the remainder for a covering, and endeavoured to snatch a few hours' sleep; but just as I had lain down, young James, assistant opium-agent, who had been trying in vain to repair the broken tiller of the helm, came and begged me, as I was the only one on board able to use the tools, to put the mortice in. Aware of my weakly state, the good thoughtful fellow abstracted a bottle of porter reserved for the ladies and brought it to me. The powerful stimulant was quite reviving, nevertheless I was utterly incapable of handling the adze, and after one or two abortive attempts was obliged to return to my mattress. Overpowering fatigue, combined with the influence of the porter, soon threw me into a happy state of oblivion, till aroused by the heavy splash of Mr. Rohan's corpse, which was consigned to the deep from my side. It was not quite dawn, and objects were but dimly visible on the nearest shore, which on close observation seemed to be receding. The boat had floated with the rising tide, and we were drifting down, unguided, at the rate of four miles an hour, we knew not whither. At daybreak we set to and repaired the disabled helm, rigged up a sail out of two blankets lashed to a bamboo, and sailed

eward more comfortably. Shortly before setting sail, a voice was heard in the distance, which, on being repeated, we recognized as that of the Rev. Mr. Fisher, and subsequently he was seen emerging from the long grass which had concealed him from sight. His condition was truly heart-rending, and it was a marvel how he had survived to reach us, with a severe wound in his right leg, having had to swim no inconsiderable distance, and to walk several miles in pursuit of the boat. Stepping on board, he burst into tears, and in an agony of grief exclaimed aloud: "My poor wife and child, both drowned in my arms!" And burying his face in his hands, he sobbed long and pitifully.

With heavy hearts we proceeded on our voyage. The day was beautiful, and all nature smiled serenely, contrasting strangely with our wretchedness and misery. The villagers, too, seemed to repose in profound peace, as if ignorant of the revolution which convulsed the empire. The change was grateful beyond description: it was the first we had seen of it after the frightful ordeal of the past fortnight.

In the afternoon the lofty banks of Khoosoomkhore stood out in bold outline against a cloudless sky, a village bitterly hostile to us, which on our first voyage had manifested a determination to oppose our passage, leading us to infer that we should not be permitted to escape with impunity now. Therefore, leaving the main channel, we steered for a branch, and swept along gallantly under a fresh breeze. At about 3 p.m. we stood nearly abreast of the detestable place, and a little later our attention was arrested by a body of armed men assembled on the left bank, apparently awaiting our approach. To avoid them as much as possible, we swerved from the deep channel and hugged the opposite shore. The result was that we got ourselves inextricably aground, and might have been captured and destroyed by the Khoosoomkhore men—who forthwith crossed over to the island and demanded our instant surrender—but for the happy fact that the body before mentioned proved to be friends, who hastened to our assistance, and got us safely moored by their village before the Khoosoomkhore people could inflict any damage. Immediately we landed, the villagers busied themselves in the most hospitable offices, providing the ladies and children with milk and cooked food in abundance, and presenting us with young yams, dispelling all fears as to the honesty of their purpose. Colonel Smith immediately called an assembly of the chief and his principal men to consult on the best means of action, and to secure a crew and guard to accompany us. The preliminaries having been arranged, it was decided that the boat should remain moored where she lay under the protection of Balgobind and his villagers, and that the voyage should be resumed at daybreak on the following morning. The announcement, as may well be supposed, was most gratifying to all parties, and we then proceeded to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded, who had been cooped up in a boat barely fit to accommodate twenty at a pinch, but which was crowded by upwards of seventy-five souls. Hungry, tired, and smarting from exposure to the blazing

sun for a whole day at the helms, with a wound festering and sore, I vainly sought every available corner to alleviate my own unendurable sufferings. An application of sweet-oil to the scorched back gave no relief, and failed to allay the rising blisters which completely covered my neck and shoulders. At length I bethought myself of taking a look into the village, where I might not only obtain a meal, but possibly a *charpoi** also, whereon to rest for the night. Stepping ashore, I beckoned to Lieutenant Swettenham (10th N. I.), who was also wounded, to accompany me, but the poor fellow pleaded inability; so proceeding alone, I asked the first man I met, if he would conduct me to his village, and procure me some food.

"*Hank, chullo*" ("Yes, come on"), was the ready reply; and with him leading the way, almost in utter darkness, over narrow footpaths overgrown with grass, and through corn-fields, we arrived, after ten minutes' walk, at a humble hut. Seating me at the foot of a tree, my hospitable host proceeded to make me welcome, and produced a *thallee*, or brass dish, of *dahl* and *chupatties* (lentil soup and hand-bread), which he set before me. It was a bold step on the part of a Rajpoot thus to disregard the prejudices of his high caste by offering food to a Christian in the same vessel which he used himself. I showed my reluctance to take advantage of his kindness by refusing to use the dish, which would have rendered it unclean to him until subjected to a course of purification, desiring him to transfer the meal to a platter of leaves, and stating my reasons for suggesting the change. The man was evidently pleased, and smiling at my consideration, observed, "The sahibs, too, understand our prejudices," a remark which was received with applause by the numerous bystanders. It was a great point gained, and I determined to make the most of my fortuitous success; so, after satisfying the cravings of hunger, I asked for a *charpoi*. One was shortly produced and gratefully accepted. It was an old rickety affair, in tatters, and otherwise unininviting in the extreme. No relief was to be found on such a couch; it was too short by a foot and a half, and the loose netting, hanging like a bag under the superincumbent weight, cut deep into the bare body. Nevertheless, it was preferable to the damp ground overrun with vermin and scorpions. "Oh, for a little straw!" I sighed; but such a luxury was beyond the resources of the village. At length I was provided with some coarse grass taken from the thatch of an old hut, which, though by no means suited to the purpose, served greatly to improve my couch; and after suffering considerable annoyance from the swarms of mosquitoes which infested the place, and no little pain from my tender back, I fell into a deep sleep from sheer exhaustion. At midnight a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and the jingle of steel ramrods roused me to consciousness. Starting up considerably alarmed at the warlike sound, I inquired what was the matter. "The colonel-sahib has sent for you on board," was

* A rude bedstead on four legs, generally constructed of bamboos, with coarse mats for bedding.

the man's reply. I arose at once to follow him, the thought occurring to me that the colonel wished to clear the coast before the hostile natives were up ; but I found myself stiff and sore, and barely capable of moving. Moreover, I felt callous, and at the time did not seem to care two straws what became of me. In that mood, throwing myself back on the *charpoi*, I bade the messenger to inform Colonel Smith that I was unable to join him. After a short absence, the man returned with the same orders ; but I was too weak and indifferent to heed them, and dismissed him with the same message. The good old colonel, however, appears to have discredited the statement, and, fearing that I was treacherously detained, despatched a third messenger, this time with a note. Happily for me, the man got mixed up in an affray on his way to the village, and lost the letter, so that the boat cast off without me. It subsequently transpired that the presence of the boat had attracted the villagers from the neighbourhood, who assumed a hostile bearing, and showed a strong disposition to plunder. Observing this, the colonel determined to quit the place, but the sight of a large sum of money paid to Balgobind's people for a crew and guard brought matters to a crisis. The intruders instantly fell on the small band, wrested a large share of the amount, and proceeded to attack the boat ; but the lashing was severed in time to prevent the outrage, which would undoubtedly have terminated in bloodshed.

Next morning the profound quiet of the village and the absence of the friendly faces which were wont to greet me, together with my own personal helplessness, contributed to make me feel the utter desolation of my condition. I was among strangers and men whose insatiable love of money and thirst for blood had extinguished every nobler sentiment of humanity. Moreover, any reckless vagabond, wishing to gain the favour of the Nawab, and reap a handsome reward, might with impunity strike off my head, and convey it to that chief. Thoughts like these sadly depressed me, and I reproached the folly which, in a weak moment, had led me to throw away the only chance of life. It was a strange infatuation ! And the thought of never again beholding the face of a relative or friend quite unmanned me. No longer able to restrain my feelings, I retired to the darkest corner of the hovel, and sought relief in a flood of tears, and consolation in fervent heartfelt prayer. At this juncture my host unexpectedly entered, and, noticing my plight, took me by the hand, saying : "Weep not ; no man dare touch a hair of your head whilst Balgobind has a drop of blood in his body." Ashamed to have been discovered in such a mood by one who could hardly appreciate my feelings or the cause of my grief, I hastily removed all outward tokens of sadness, and joined him in friendly conversation, glad indeed, under the circumstances, to find any sympathy in a native.

Day after day passed in monotonous gloom. I was completely shut out from the world beyond the precincts of the village, and in utter ignorance of the fate of near relatives and friends scattered over the wide

extent of India. Having nothing but such desponding reflections to occupy my mind, time hung heavily and rendered existence doubly intolerable. After a while a rumour prevailed in the village that the colonel's boat had reached Cawnpore, but subsequent reports contradicted it. As I afterwards learned, the first was the correct version, for the boat did reach Bithoor, where it fell into the hands of the Nana, who caused all the men to be murdered, with the exceptions of Colonels Smith and Goldie and Mr. Thornhill. The captives were conveyed to Cawnpore, where every soul perished in the barbarous massacre which was committed on General Havelock's advance towards that city. Rumours were also current of the escape of two Europeans from Major Robertson's boat, who, like myself, had found shelter in the neighbourhood of the village where it was captured. Subsequent communication with them proved them to be Major Robertson himself and Mr. David Churcher. The former had been desperately wounded, and succumbed, after enduring intense agony for nearly two months; the latter escaped to the British camp, on the re-occupation of Futtehghur by Sir Colin Campbell, in January, 1858.

The filthy quarters allotted me in an old bullock-shed, tenanted by cattle, where mosquitos and sand-flies swarmed in spite of the suffocating smoke which was nightly kindled to expel them, worrying both man and beast, so exhausted all endurance that I seriously contemplated effecting my escape to Cawnpore. This alternative suggested itself owing to my having hitherto failed in joining Messrs. Probyn and Edwards, who were within fifteen miles of me, Hurdeobuksh deeming it hazardous to have too many of us together, on account of the threats of the Nawab of Furrukabad, who had offered a large reward for our heads. After considerable difficulty, I succeeded in finding a boatman in a neighbouring village, who was willing to risk the enterprise, on promise of a handsome recompence. We proposed taking a canoe, which would have conveyed us to Cawnpore in a night; but the means of procuring one were wanting, and the wary boatman was not disposed to advance the few rupees necessary for its loan or purchase. The times, too, were unpropitious, for the most harrowing accounts of murders and massacres of Europeans, and of their total extermination, reached the village from all directions. Consequently, I was obliged to chew the cud of patience and abide the progress of events, which, sooner or later, must reach their culminating point, when a favourable change might be hopefully anticipated. The interim I whiled away with the natives, who became extremely familiar in their intercourse with the lonely stranger.

At this period the following singular incident tended greatly to mitigate my solitude and depression of spirits. Balgobind had throughout maintained that the arms of the British would ultimately triumph, and as our intimacy grew closer, I one day had the curiosity to ask him his reason for entertaining so favourable a view of our situation. The simple but sagacious Bosphrin, looking me full in the face and nodding his head significantly, replied: "Listen: our countrymen have neither

wisdom nor leaders, competent to turn their advantages to account. Moreover," he added, "they are destitute of justice and truth, and have imbrued their hands in the blood of innocent women and children. Ram will never prosper their cause." A few days later I was surprised to see him walking up to my hut at an unusually early hour, his countenance beaming with pleasurable excitement. "*Khoosh ho*," he exclaimed; "*ab dyeh*." ("Rejoice, they are come,")—alluding to the Europeans, who under the immortal Havelock had driven out the hordes under the Nana and recaptured Cawnpore. The little band of heroes who had accomplished this daring feat was magnified into an army of ten thousand fierce bearded veterans, who shot the rebels with their extraordinary weapons beyond a mile distant (referring to the Enfield rifles), the bullets of which were said to kill before the discharge was heard. The irresistible charges of the cavalry, too, were coloured with the embellishments of the imaginative native mind, ever prone to exaggeration. Shortly after, the intelligence of the successful re-occupation of Cawnpore was confirmed, producing a marvellous change in the disaffected. The villagers who before had hardly deigned to notice me now lavished their spontaneous attentions on me, and Hurdeobuksh despatched a messenger to inquire after my welfare, the man returning a few days later to conduct me to Khumsura, where Measra, Probyn and Edwards were. But the strictest secrecy was necessary in order to execute the design. Several hostile villages lay in the way, and many of the inhabitants of the adjacent village, who were implicated in the attempt to plunder Colonel Smith's boat, were anxious to get rid of me, and thereby destroy all evidence of their guilt. The arrangements for the journey were speedily completed, but I was resolved that Balgobind, to whom I owed my safety, and who was thoroughly trustworthy, should be apprised of the intended departure, and if necessary assist in furthering our plans. It was, therefore, left to him, as soon as my absence was discovered, to express as much surprise as the rest of the villagers, and to lead the men on a wrong scent, should they show a disposition to follow me. In consideration of his services, I assured him of an adequate reward on the restoration of order. I may here mention that Balgobind faithfully executed his part in the scheme, and successfully misled the villagers, and on the re-establishment of our authority I had the gratification of fulfilling my promise by obtaining for him a suitable recognition from the British Government.

The guide having appointed a rendezvous under a solitary bush, in the centre of an extensive corn-field, took his leave, and made us join him after 10 P.M., when the villagers had retired to rest. At the concerted time I stealthily let myself over a low wall which screened me from observation, and following the directions received, made my way to the spot indicated through fields and jungle of long grass. There I found the men waiting patiently, holding a pony for my accommodation. We now hurried on as fast as the inundated state of the country and the pace of my steed would admit, avoiding by circuitous roads every village in

the way. The barking of hungry curs at our heels caused us no little trepidation, lest their noise might alarm the villagers; but luckily such howlings are not unusual with village dogs, and we passed on in the moonlight, the brilliancy of which had been another source of anxiety to us. An hour's ride, with my legs hanging unsupported by stirrups, tired me excessively, and, unable any longer to endure the uncomfortable seat, I took to my bare feet, which the necessity of the times had inured to such roughness, and found great relief in walking. About midnight the guide abandoned the pony, which had proved only an encumbrance, proceeding through flooded nullahs, where we had to pick our way with the aid of long bamboo staves, which also served us for clubs of defence, and, after two hours' brisk marching, arrived at an island in the midst of a wide tract of submerged country, where droves of cattle were herded for pasture. My guide, expecting that we should be challenged by the herdsmen, bade me observe strict silence while he made the replies, as it was impossible to avoid these unscrupulous characters, who, generally speaking, are led by their wild mode of life to resort to the profession of dacoits and highwaymen. Taking the footpath skirting the island, along the ridge of the swollen Ramgunga, flowing with a rapidity and roar which made itself heard a mile on either side of the river, we continued our progress, assuming as much unconcern as possible in order to elude detection—myself well enveloped in a blanket, with nothing but my eyes exposed. Two or three men now stepped forward and stood with chins reclining on their hands, doubled one upon another, over the end of their long formidable iron-bound clubs.

"Who are you?" asked one as he approached us.

"Hurdeobuksh's sepahi," answered the guide.

"And who is this with you?" inquired another, as he deliberately walked up to scrutinize my countenance, removing the covering, as if unsatisfied with the response.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed out the impudent fellow, half in jest and half in sarcasm, as he discovered a white face.

"Is this the individual who was with Balgobind at Terah?" rejoined he, addressing the guide.

"The same," I replied, finding it useless to maintain the daylight any longer. My presumption evidently pleased them and won their good-will, for the man immediately added: "Jah, dutch gai" ("Go, you have escaped"), and good-naturedly tapping me on the shoulder, with sundry jocular remarks, bade us adieu.

Glad to have got clear of such suspicious friends so easily, we proceeded onward, and reached Hurdeobuksh's *gharres* a little after three in the morning—the place which I had quitted two months previously with rather different feelings. It was now perfectly isolated, quite inaccessible to artillery, and consequently impregnable. Cautiously did the guide lead me through the winding footpaths to the entrance. There he left me, and entered into conversation in whispers with the watch, then conducted me

to the fort, and concealed me under the eaves of a hut while he started off to report my arrival. These precautions were deemed necessary, as many of Hurdeobuksh's retainers were untrustworthy, and he was therefore anxious to keep my presence a secret to them as far as possible. In the course of ten minutes the guide returned, accompanied by a second person, who had orders to proceed with me at once to Khussoura. Following my new guide, who communicated with me in whispers and by signs, we took a footpath, just discernible through the long grass which the late rains had thrown up, along the ridge of an embankment, which served to keep out the flood, and also as an outwork of defence, and reached the Ramgunga after narrowly escaping the fangs of a huge snake which we had disturbed on the way.

Whilst waiting for the ferry, I lay down in a boat moored by the shore, and dropped off into a sound sleep from the fatigue of the journey, and finally reached Khussoura a little after sunrise, having swam the last nullah before entering the village.

For the rest of the narrative I beg to refer the reader to Mr. Edwards's journal of his "Personal Adventures during the Indian Mutiny," wherein will be found some interesting details of our meeting, and subsequent escape to Havelock's camp at Cawnpore a month after I joined him and Mr. Probyn.

In conclusion, I may add that Bhyro, the faithful servant who behaved so nobly in striving to save my brother's wife and child, fell a captive with them. He was carried back to Futehghur with them and two or three other ladies and children, and delivered up to the Nawab, who cast them into prison. There, after suffering the severest trials and privations, while their wounds were yet fresh, they were led out by the sepoyas, in company with about thirty native Christians, and shot down like felons. Bhyro contrived to make his escape under cover of the night, when being ferried across the Ganges. Hearing of my safety, the worthy man determined to find me out, and had planned my escape to Agra in disguise, collecting a small sum from his fellow-servants to provide the necessary outfit. Unhappily, the poor man was seized with a fatal disease on the morning of his departure, and succumbed to it in a few hours. The sad tidings of his death reached me shortly before our departure for Cawnpore, and caused me great sorrow. He had served my lamented brother upwards of twenty years, and had nursed me as a child in his arms. His devotion had lately been put to the severest test, and had proved unswervingly faithful.

GAVIN S. JONES.

Politics in the Sandwich Islands.

The history—so brief and so picturesque—of the little septinsular kingdom in the North Pacific has become latterly pretty well known, both here and on the Continent. Its king has his place among “Men of the Time,” and the Gotha Almanack gives statistics of his Hawaiian dynasty and national resources. The importance of the geographical position of the islands is claiming increased attention with the Governments of this continent and of America, and the expected visit of the young and widowed Queen Emma to England next spring will no doubt draw forth our sympathies, as well as our curiosity. During the past year, treaties of friendship and commerce have been negotiated between several continental Governments and Hawaii, and others are in progress.

In November, 1863, the fourth king bearing the name of Kaméhaméha died prematurely, after an enlightened reign of nine years, yet before quite attaining the age of thirty. He was succeeded on the throne by a brother, two years his senior, who assumed, on his accession, the family name of Kaméhaméha V.* With his brother, this prince had, in 1850, visited England, France, and Belgium. They spoke and wrote our language fluently; read our history; studied our laws; mingled in our society; and saw events through European spectacles. What impressions of politics, etiquette, and religion, they thus acquired were ineffaceable in their minds, and thereafter influenced all their conduct.

By the articles of the constitution given to the people in 1852 by Kaméhaméha III., it was incumbent on the successor to the vacant throne to take an oath that he would maintain the constitution of the kingdom whole and inviolate, and would govern in conformity therewith. Kaméhaméha V. abstained from taking this oath. There were features in the existing constitution which were, to his mind, objectionable, and he resolved to seize the opportunity for making reforms, and bringing the kingdom into further accordance with the most enlightened European monarchies. During his brother's reign the present ruler of Hawaii had occupied the post of minister of interior. He had shown great aptitude for business, and had had leisure and means for observing the working of a system which contained the elements of democracy and puritanism. It will be necessary to describe, in a few words, the growth of this political system.

Up to the year 1839 the Hawaiian Islands were governed by an absolute monarch, and upon strictly feudal principles. In that year the

* In the vowel language of Polynesia this name has the soft pronunciation of Ka-mé-hamé-ha.

efforts of the American missionaries and ex-missionaries, who had given much useful assistance in governing the country, worked so far on the patriotic and bon-vivant king, Kaméhameha III., as to induce him to sign a Bill of Rights, and, the following year, to grant a constitution, by which absolute rule was yielded up, and irresponsible power exchanged for government by the three estates of king, nobles, and people.

The king had never been out of his own small dominions. He had to be guided by the teaching and advice of the active-minded men who had already volunteered to assist in holding the reins of government, and who showed that they would not be averse to take the ribbons entirely into their own hands upon occasion. But at that time the king's advisers did not prompt to greater change than the conversion of absolutism into limited monarchy.

The scheme of government thus produced was naturally a hybrid one. Its promoters were Americans; they were missionaries, or persons who, having been missionaries, had left that calling for official or officious life. The constitution was a mosaic, to which the Pentateuch, the British Government, and the American Declaration of Independence each contributed a part. Yet, in spite of manifold defects, it was a revolution in the right direction. It lasted twelve years; and under it the nation advanced in civilization and prosperity.

The administration consisted of four departments; there was a minister of interior affairs, who was also premier; a minister of foreign relations, of finance, of public instruction; and an attorney-general. In 1845 the government was joined and strengthened by Mr. Wyllie, a Scotch gentleman, who had been well known in London, and was a friend of General Miller, the English commissioner in the Sandwich Islands. Statute laws were passed, and a little tinkering of the constitution began.

It seemed the fate of all political opinion, when acclimated in Hawaii, to "suffer a sea change." We have seen a tyrant taking up limited monarchy, democrats from the United States constituting a kingdom; and now we are to see an early and ardent member of the Reform Club converted into a staunch Conservative, and an American attorney-general writing himself in one of his letters "a rank Tory."

With the infusion of fresh blood, it came to pass that, in 1850, the king recommended a new constitution, and appointed a commission of three persons to frame a new model. It was perfected, and, in 1852, was signed by the king, who died in something less than two years after. This constitution was an advance on the former one; but a good deal of the Levitical element and some revolutionary rags remained in it. Dr. Judd was one of the three commissioners, his coadjutors being the chief, Joane II, and the Chief Justice Lee. The two former of this triad will make their reappearances hereafter.

It happened that while much discussion was going on in Honolulu about the proposed new constitution, the Hawaiian consulate in China was represented by the senior member of the commercial house of Jaynes

and Company. At the same time, Sir John Bowring was governor of Hong Kong ; and a correspondence was brought about between the latter and Mr. Wyllie on the same subject, and a draft of the constitution was sent to Sir John for his opinion. The editor of Jeremy Bentham objected to the opening sentence, in which it is asserted that all men are created free and equal. Bentham had himself been the correspondent of several of the American Presidents ; and in his "Critical Examination of the Declaration of Rights," exposed the pretension that "all men are born free and equal." "No man ever was, is, or will be, born free ; all are born helpless children, in a state of absolute subjection to parents, and, in many countries as slaves, in vassalage to owners ; and as to equality, the statement is absurd, the condition of no two men, to say nothing of *all*, being equal, in the many gradations which exist, of wealth and poverty, servants and masters, influence and position." Sir John, who had been Bentham's most intimate friend and executor, quoted the views of his master, which also appeared to his own mind incontestable. In spite, however, of any efforts which Mr. Wyllie could make, supported by the China correspondence, the constitution commenced with the old assertion, "God hath created all men free and equal." Article 12 pronounced that "No person who imports a slave, or slaves, into the king's dominions, shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights in this realm." Article 19 prescribed, "All elections of the people shall be by ballot ;" and Article 78 established manhood-suffrage. Moreover, the king's power was checked and controlled by the strange institution of the *Kuhina-Nui*—an invention which, if borrowed from any other nation, must have come from Japan. This "regulator" to the government machine, who stood above ministers, and, as it were, on the uppermost step of the throne, might be a man or a woman—indeed, was generally the latter. As she was to be the king's special counsellor, and was to have powers almost equal to the king's, with whom she would necessarily require to have long closetings on State affairs, she must have been a discouragement to a queen of jealous temperament, and not a little detrimental to the progress of business, since the constitution provides that "the king and the kuhina-nui shall have a negative on each other's public acts." Among his, or her, miscellaneous offices, the kuhina-nui had charge of the great seal of the kingdom, the royal standard, and the national flag. Also, in case of the king's death or minority, this solid shadow had to perform all duties, and exercise all powers ordinarily vested in the king. Such were some of the features of the constitution which existed till August, 1864.

Kamehameha V. came to the throne, as we have related, in November, 1863, and commenced the exercise of his functions, but without taking the oath prescribed by, and in favour of, his then constitution. Mr. Wyllie was made minister of foreign affairs ; an Englishman with whom he had been long intimate, and whose devotion to the Hawaiian nation was undoubted, received the portfolio of interior ;

a French gentleman, formerly vice-consul for France, had charge of the finances; and his attorney-general was an American, who, like others of his nation on the bench or at the bar, was loyal, clear-sighted, and had definite views of government. It was not a bad team for the first stage out of town, and the start was promising.

The king had determined not to take the oath. From after occurrences, it is to be inferred that there were differences of opinion in the cabinet on this subject. The attorney-general, and the minister of foreign relations, however, appear to have been consistent in their support of the king's view, and a convention was resolved on to amend the constitution.

The word convention has to English ears an uncanny ring. It reminds them of Paris in 1792, and of England in 1848. Four of the five points in the charter then clamoured for here, already existed in the Hawaiian constitution; viz. the ballot, universal suffrage, non-property qualification, and paid representatives. Annual parliaments were excluded because it was more convenient to members to assemble biennially. Now Kaméhaméha V. wished to get rid, by means of a national vote, of universal suffrage, and to replace it by a qualification based on income and property, united to a certain advance in mental acquirements and moral fitness.

The reason why a convention was necessary to the king's purpose was this—that though the constitution contained power for the legislature to amend it, the consent of two biennial parliaments was necessary to effect any reform. Such a delay was a strain on the king's patience, and he remembered that he had not yet taken what may be called the coronation oath. But the decisions of a specially convened body might be followed immediately by a session of parliament, and thus the reconstruction of the State might be completed within three or four months. This was the motive which decided the king's actions. A convention was accordingly summoned by proclamation—political feeling instantly responding throughout the islands. The prime objects of the king and his advisers were known, or felt to be, to destroy the radical element in the constitution, to base electoral privilege on a property qualification, and to give a larger place in the State to the king, allowing him to govern as well as reign. The native, long accustomed to the feudal yoke, felt no aversion to this design; but it alarmed the minds of many settled foreigners—the American missionaries (but not all) being especially aroused at the prospect of absolutism and aristocracy, Puritanism and Popery. They raised an outcry in their districts, and led the people to think it their duty to send, not representatives, but delegates to the convention.

The king in the meantime was not idle. He made a progress through his dominions, attended by his faithful foreign-office minister. They delivered speeches—some judicious, some inopportune—and on the 7th of July, 1864, the convention was opened by the king, who, before proceeding to the court-house, attended service at the Episcopal church.

The business of the session began the following day, the three sessions

sitting in the same chamber. The composition of the convention was as follows:—First, the king—president. Second, nobles, sixteen in number, headed by the kuhina-nui: of the remaining fifteen nobles eleven were natives, two Britons, and two Americans. Third, delegates, twenty-seven in number; the white skins and native blood being about equally divided. Judge Robertson was appointed vice-president; and M. Varigny and the attorney-general, though neither nobles nor representatives, attended, like the French Minister without portfolio, to assist in the debates. The House appointed Mr. Judd to be secretary; Mr. Judd named a native chaplain, and Anglo-Saxons for interpreter, reporter, and serjeant-at-arms.

Of the nobles, as might be expected, the very large majority seconded the king's views. One of this estate, however, possessed of the short but emphatic name of Li, who had been one of the three commissioners engaged to construct the constitution of 1852, was less tractable and more democratic than his peers. He was also more talkative; and both from the frequency of his being on his legs, and from the two conspicuous vowels which composed his name, he quite fulfilled the vulgar definition of *egotism*, viz. letting the private *I* be too much in the public *eye*.

The king, in his opening address, pronounced with great facility in English and in his native tongue, briefly informed the convention of the objects for which he had summoned them; and in all subsequent speeches he used the bi-lingual method. The reports published under the name of *The Convention* are printed in parallel columns of the two languages.

"History repeats itself." The very question which so long agitated the assembled States-General in 1789, whether the three orders should sit in one or in separate chambers, excited in Honolulu long and obstinate discussion. It was nearly a week before the question was settled. The conclusion arrived at was that the three estates should sit and debate in one chamber. After which the rules were debated and carried; that relating to voting being that there should be united voting on the rules or by-laws, but constitutional subjects should be introduced by the representatives and put to the vote among themselves. If a resolution failed there in consequence of a minority, its quietus was made. If it passed the lower house, the votes of the nobles were taken on it; and after a majority of that estate, it was submitted to the king for his approval or veto.

Comparing these proceedings with those of the States-General in Paris, we see that whereas the Tiers Etat demanded that their "brothers the nobles" should sit and vote in one, and that the People's Chamber, the wish of the Hawaiian representatives was rather to vote apart. Five weeks were required for the popular victory at the Luxembourg; nearly a week was occupied in Honolulu.

The rules established for discussion were good, and there was considerable ability shown in the management of the debates. The weakest part of the proceedings of this convention was, that when a question had been apparently definitively settled and a resolution passed one day, it was occasionally re-opened the next, under the form of a new resolution.

The business of the convention advanced rather slowly. Determined opposition to the king's design soon showed itself among the representatives ; and a junto of some five or six members of the extreme left made a stand-up fight. One of the nobles, a cabinet minister also, whose views were opposed to the meeting of the Assembly, absented himself on the plea of illness, and retired to his own estate, nor returned till near the close, and that under pressing solicitation. The determined knot of root-and-branch men just mentioned consisted chiefly of Dr. Judd, ex-missionary, ex-minister, and ex-United-States-man ; his son, the secretary ; a rural missionary ; a native lawyer ; and a Scandinavian resident, named Knudsen. Among the constitutional weapons which the Opposition armed themselves with, sarcasm was not wanting ; and a subject for their irony was easily discovered. It happened that in some outlying district the ballot-papers of the electors were collected in a *bucket* ; and so greatly was this joke or this grievance worked, and so often was the pail returned to, that the convention was in considerable danger of being wrecked on that very small rock.

After three weeks of discussion, pauses, wrangling and voting, the king himself withdrew for a time, from the real or assumed cause of indisposition. His Majesty's place was supplied in the interim by Judge Robertson and M. Varigny. At last, came the great questions of universal suffrage, and property qualifications in voters and representatives. The abolition of the kuhina-nui had been easily managed. There was hard hitting about the suffrage. Yet the American party blundered when M. Knudsen drew a lamentable picture of the English people—poor, oppressed, starved, ignorant, and irreligious, all owing to the want of manhood-suffrage. His statements were derived from "Mr. Joseph Kay, appointed by the University of Oxford to investigate the condition of the lower classes." The reply came swiftly and hard from a chief, the Hon. D. Kalakana, a native who had never left the confines of home. He said, "Mr. Knudsen had been very ready to give them instances of English poverty, which that gentleman considered arose from the fact of the people not having universal suffrage ; but he forgot to say anything of the state of things in America, where universal suffrage did exist, and which was one cause of the present war. The statement of Mr. Knudsen referred to the social condition of England in 1851, but, had he been there in 1861, he would have found a very different state of things existing ; for, within those years, great improvements have been made with regard to the poor-law and condition of the lower classes, though, no doubt, a portion of the manufacturing districts of England were now suffering in consequence of the American war. Mr. Knudsen also stated that purity of election existed in the United States where the ballot system prevailed ; but, according to reports of American papers, it seems so if there was not much purity of election existing from the ballot ; but the reverse. This had been confirmed to him by a naturalized American gentleman, who was well known in California, who had told him (Mr. Kalakana) that 'if you

wanted a man's vote in New York, just show him a revolver or a bowie-knife.' In California, the result of universal suffrage was the establishment of a vigilance committee to preserve law and order."

It is curious to see political events and persons transmitted through different media, or reflected back from a distance. Mr. Gladstone would probably find some amusement in seeing his views of the extension of the suffrage reviewed in the legislative assembly of the Sandwich Islands—which was done.

In the long and serious discussions on property and income qualification, dollars were pitted against education, and the natural right of all men to drop papers into ballot-boxes was sustained against both with the vigour of despair. It was Carlyle's "Gigability" against the voting instinct of the natural man. Mr. Hitchcock led the van. "Neither dollars nor want of dollars, was the criterion of respectability." Mr. Green, a missionary, followed on the same side, and presented the sad picture of a notorious thief being elected as a representative, and elections being decided by the constable of the district. These were the certain consequences of a legislation of voters. He held the right of universal suffrage as one of the greatest and dearest rights of a free people.

M. Varigny, on the part of the king, inquired whether it were right to give a candle to a blind man to carry in a powder-magazine, or a vote to a man who could neither read nor write. Would representatives place an open razor in the hands of a baby, or the franchise in the hands of those totally incompetent to use it properly, or unable to read the name written or printed on a ballot?

On the 9th of August, the king was able to return to his place at the convention, and he listened to the debate on this main question with considerable patience. Intermixed with some other subjects—as for instance, the kingly dignity, the king *qua* king, opposed to "chief magistrate"—the qualification discussion continued till the abrupt termination of the convention four days later; producing some excellent debate, and showing that the spirit of statesmanship was not wanting in his assembly. The most remarkable of the speeches were those delivered by two native representatives named Kahaleahu and Kaawahi. These addresses exhibit the powers and characteristics of the Polynesian mind in a very favourable light.

"May it please your Majesty, the nobles, and the delegates," commenced Kahaleahu, "a great deal has been said on both sides during this discussion, and much ability displayed both on the part of the ministry and that of the opponents among the delegates. The question for the convention to decide is, as to the expediency of allowing the very poor among the people the privilege of voting for representatives. . . . It is objected to this provision, that it is taking away the right of the people. The right of the people, without regard to property qualification, is protection for each in his person and the products of his industry. These are amply provided for under the laws, and therefore it is erroneous to say that any right of the people is taken away by the 63rd article."

Mr. Kaawahi said, speaking of the disputed 62nd article, "If I believed that it really was taking away a right from the people, I would very quickly support the motion to reject this article. . . . What were the motives of his Majesty in placing this article before us? Did he thereby intend to take away one of the rights of the people? I do not think so. His Majesty is of the same race with his people; he is their sire; and whatever he sees is for their good, that he proposes, and whatever is detrimental to them that he withholds. Believing thus, I decidedly object to the offensive language used before his Majesty about his taking away the people's rights. Neither the king nor his ministers have ever done, or attempted to do, anything of the sort. . . . I would ask the delegates to remember the words of the delegate for Makawoa yesterday, when he said the people of his district could take care of themselves, without any assistance from the ministry. Who and what are the ministry? Are they not the hands by which the king carries on the government? Are they not the servants of the people—of those of Makawoa as well as other places? The delegate for Kaanapali says there are a great many impoverished people in his district. I am well aware of it, and also that they are a hard-working people, and able to earn a great deal more than the amount proposed in this article, and that there is plenty of employment to be had in the district. The delegate from Kaanapali says they have bought land from the Hon. Mr. Bishop. Well, there is plenty of fire-wood on that land, and the Lahaina sugar-mill wants it, but they don't bring sufficient. Then they have large plains on which to raise stock. Altogether, I cannot admit that they have any right to be impoverished; and if they are it is certainly their own fault. Let them not object to a law which is for the benefit of the whole country from one end to the other. It is not a reasonable argument to put forward about the poverty of the people, preventing them from obtaining the privilege of voting, when we consider our position. Here we are pleasantly situated as to climate; we can plough and plant and reap at any and all seasons of the year, without any winter or dry season to interfere with our labours. Employment is to be had in abundance, throughout the land, on the various sugar plantations, and labour is in demand. There is no lack of a market for our produce, for we are on the highway of commerce. The seas are open and free to the fisherman, the forests are waiting for the woodman's axe, and there are a hundred different branches of industry in every direction, open and waiting for the hands to improve them. Why, then, is this cry of poverty raised as an argument for striking out the property qualification, and permitting the idle to indulge in their dreams? If the people are made to understand and appreciate the great privilege of the ballot, it will be an incentive to industry, in order to choose whomever they may desire to represent them in the legislature." But his Majesty's Opposition was not to be moved.

On the 18th of August, the king's patience had broken down. "This is the fifth day of the discussion of this article," said his Majesty. "I am very sorry that we do not agree on this important point. It is clear to me that if universal suffrage is permitted, this government will soon lose its monarchical character. Thank you, delegates and nobles, for the readiness with which you have come to this convention, in accordance with my proclamation. As we do not agree, it is useless to prolong the session. And as at the time his Majesty Kaméhaméha III. gave the constitution of the year 1852, he reserved to himself the power of taking it away, if it was not for the interest of his government and people; and as it is clear to me that that king left the revision of the constitution to my predecessor and myself; therefore, as I sit in his seat, on the part of the sovereignty of the Hawaiian Islands, I make known to-day that the constitution of 1852 is abrogated. I will give you a constitution." His Majesty requested ministers to remain at present in their respective positions, in order to avoid confusion and disturbance, and he then dissolved the convention.

It was, perhaps, time for the incubation to be over. The convention had been sitting five weeks with no profitable result. The obstinacy of the opposition had defeated itself.

On the 20th of August, a week after the breaking up of the convention, the promised new constitution appeared. It omits the obnoxious axiom about "free and equal," abolishes the office of "kuhina-nui," gives the king a larger place in the State, makes cabinet ministers more responsible, excludes the ballot, prescribes as the minimum qualification of a representative real estate of five hundred dollars' value, and annual income of two hundred and fifty dollars; and of an elector, property of one hundred and fifty dollars, or twenty-five dollars a year rent on leasehold property, and seventy-five dollars yearly income, together with certain intellectual acquirements. It includes a stringent article on royal marriages, and on the succession to the Crown; and, the king being unmarried, it provides for a new *stirps* for a royal family, should the present race become extinct.

Such is the little passage of history which has been in progress during the last few months in Hawaii. It is "distinct," though "distant;" and interesting when we recollect that the English nation also had its childhood.

A Memorial of Thackeray's School-Days.

It may be interesting to those who have known Thackeray only at a distance and from his works, and to not a few of those, also, who had personal intimacy with him in his later life, to hear a little about his earlier. There are, of course, many of his schoolfellows still living who had such general knowledge of him as boys ordinarily have of each other in a large public school; but only two or three survive who were closely intimate with him out of school-hours, and who knew what his tastes and amusements were, and what his character and disposition when off drill. I do not propose to give the present sketch because I can do it well, but because I am almost the only one who can do it at all. The notices that appeared of him at a time when our sorrow for his loss was yet recent touched very slightly upon his school-days, and, in the many and varied judgments of his personal character, the critics have gained very little light from any knowledge of him when that character was in the course of forming. After all, it is only an outer key that I, or any bystander, can put into the reader's hand. The lock of the inner character of even a boy of genius is generally so complex that it cannot be opened from without.

In speaking of the youth of a great man there is, perhaps, some temptation to throw back a little of the light and colour of the later days upon the earlier; in a faithful portrait this must steadily be resisted. It is more allowable to give those traits of the earlier days which best interpret the later, and it is perfectly fair to suggest the interpretation.

It was when he was between the ages of thirteen and fifteen and a half or sixteen that I knew Thackeray best. He was then a rosy-faced boy with dark curling hair, and a quick, intelligent eye, ever twinkling with humour, and good humour. He was stout and broad-set, and gave no promise of the stature which he afterwards reached. It was during a short but severe illness, just before he left school, that he grew rapidly, leaving his sick-bed certainly a good many inches taller than he was when he entered it, and heading at once nearly all his contemporaries. No man ever owed more of his mental growth to time and exercise, and less of his bodily stature.

For the usual schoolboy sports and games Thackeray had no taste or passion whatever, any more than in after-life for those field-sports which seem to have been the delight of his schoolfellow and fellow humorist, Leech. Such amusements would have come probably next to Euclid and algebra in his list of dislikes. But he was by no means what a good many men of genius are said to have been in their youth—disposed to isolation or solitary ruminating. For a ~~neglecting~~ boy he was wonderfully social, full

of vivacity and enjoyment of life. His happy *insouciance* was constant. Never was any lad at once so jovial, so healthy, and so sedantary. Good spirits and merriment seemed to enable him to dispense with the glow of cricket or foot-ball; and if in his still earlier days he ever "fagged out," it must have been most bitterly against his will. We were now and then, indeed, out together in small fishing parties, but it was for the talking, and the change, and the green fields, and the tea abroad instead of at home—cakes, &c. accompanying (for he was always rather goutative, never greedy)—that Thackeray liked these expeditions.

I question whether he knew the difference between a roach and a gudgeon—except when fried—whether he ever caught either the one or the other I am much disposed to doubt; or whether he cared about doing so. Thus the reader may have seen many a citizen angler on the banks of the Lea, or punted on the Thames, with vast provision of tackle and ground-bait, but whose main felicity, to judge from the tankard and sandwiches by his side, does not depend on anything so capricious as a fish's appetite, but on something far more certain and substantial, videlicet his own.

I have just now lying on the table beside me, in Thackeray's handwriting of some forty years ago,—his writing was always beautiful,—a little programme of *Bombastes Furioso*, enacted by himself and some three or four of his schoolfellows, in which he took the part of Fuscos, and to the best of my recollection, did it very well; but the thing dropped through, and there were no repetitions; the rest had very little dramatic zeal. This was almost the only common amusement in which I ever knew him join, *con amore*. He had a passion for theatricals, of course kept under restraint at school, but now and then gratified when he visited friends in London, on the half-holidays.

There was also a little speaking club in which he would sometimes take part merely out of good nature, for he hated speaking then, and I do not believe he liked it much better afterwards.

He was eminently good-tempered to all, especially the younger boys, and nothing of a tyrant or bully. Instead of a blow or a threat, I can just hear him saying to one of them, "Hookey" (a sobriquet of a son of the late Bishop Carr, of Bombay), "go up and fetch me a volume of *Irakhos* out of my drawer, that's a good fellow; in the same drawer you will, perhaps, find a penny, which you may take for yourself." The penny was, indeed, rather problematical, but still realized sufficiently often to produce excitement in the mind of the youth thus addressed, and to make the service a willing one. When disappointed, it was more than probable that the victim would call Thackeray a "great snob" for misleading him, a title for which the only vengeance would be a humorous and benignant smile. In the two or three years that I am recording, I scarcely ever saw Thackeray seriously angry, or even his brow wrinkled with a frown. He has been called a cynic; it is doubtful whether a real cynic could ever be manufactured out of a boy who had such powers as he had of sarcasm.

and who used them so little unkindly. Nor is it to be believed, by those who knew him well, that, though in after-life he had his eruptions of wrath, and moments of severity, after he had undergone the tremendously searching hot and cold ordeal of great trials and great triumphs, his nature was radically changed.

Thackeray had nearly all the materials that usually go to the making of a first-rate classical scholar. He had wonderful memory, an absolute faculty of imitation, which might have been employed in following the great classic models of verse and prose; he had the power of acquiring language; and, it is needless to say, an intense admiration of the beautiful. He got to love his Horace, and was, no doubt, *actually* a better scholar than many of our first-rate writers of English; but he was not, and never pretended to be, a high classical scholar. I speak of the fact; none but a pedant would think of detracting from him on that ground: we have five hundred, five thousand high classical scholars, without getting a Thackeray out of them. "Son esprit était à libre allure," as Lamartine says of one of his school friends. He had no school industry. One would be sorry to let any schoolboy read the long list of great literary men of whom the same might be said. Probably, too, as a younger boy he had been ill-grounded, and so lost confidence when he came to cope with those who had been better initiated, and gave up the race in which he thought he might fail, for he had plenty of pride and ambition. Not one of us would have given him credit for that "stalk of carl hemp" with which he met subsequent misfortunes and difficulties, and that firm and noble perseverance with which he worked his way gradually upwards, when the cheers of encouragement were comparatively faint and few. No one could in those early days have believed that there was much work in him, or that he would ever get to the top of any tree by hard climbing.

Thackeray, then, experienced the usual amount of nausea, and perhaps of difficulty, in making verses and translations, and was, at fourteen, more thankful, perhaps, than most boys are for a helping hand. I see now, on the back of one of his drawings, on the same sheet with a portion of an old exercise, this acknowledgment in intentional doggerel—

These verses were written by William Ewhank,
And him for his kindness I very much thank.

His exercise was, indeed, constantly left to the very last moment, whilst he was busy with a burlesque sketch of its subject, or deeply engaged in a volume of Shakespeare, Scott, or Southey, from whom he took his real lessons, not from Chapman or Churton.

Burke, when speaking of the American colonies, praises "the wise and salutary neglect by which a generous nature is allowed to take its own way to perfection." Doubtless the neglect of the rich ore of Thackeray's talents was not deliberate on the part of his masters, but it suited the purpose as well as if it had been. In the wholesome ways and large streams

of a multitudinous public school, as Charterhouse then was, many of the gifted pass without recognition of their gifts, if they do not appear to be of the kind specially in demand. In some cases this is a pity; but it may be doubted whether even the anxious and perpetual superintendence of a careful and clever private tutor, appreciating and trying to make the most of his material, would have been so useful to Thackeray as were his freedom and self-chosen course. Had his scholarship been perfected like that of a Canning or a Frere, early scholastic distinction might have tempted him to the regular practice of a profession other than that of a man of letters, with its struggles, experiments, and varied contact with men. Perhaps he never would have submitted to professional trammels; had he done so, the sparkles of such a wit could not have been hid, but they would probably have passed off in *jeux d'esprit*, or those lighter efforts for which alone there is generally room where original genius submits to the burdens of successful professional toil. At any rate, we should have been far less likely to have had our great novelist.

Though keenly ambitious, and very sensitive of failure, Thackeray was wonderfully free from anything like vanity or conceit. He had small confidence in his own powers, and was naturally inclined to rate himself below his mark. The better scholarship of many of his contemporaries may have had something to do with this. However, this want of confidence showed itself in many ways afterwards, and even at a time when his genius and his fame were at their full growth. For example, he was, even to the last, sensitive of blame to a degree scarcely ever found in men satisfied of their own powers. Like other great but inwardly modest men, his first impulse was to overrate rather than underrate the ability of others, and he readily accorded the "clever fellow," uttered in perfect sincerity, though, when he came to a thorough examination of their performances, he was keen critic enough. Not many years ago, he complained to me, with most earnest sincerity, of the poorness of his memory, when every book that he wrote was giving fresh proof of its retentiveness, and the readiness with which it recalled everything that he had read or seen—a faculty that gave him a power of varied allusion *without cram*, in which he seems to have only one rival among the writers of fiction of the present day. To his friends he talked freely of the difficulties he experienced in writing. His own final great and deserved success, he never anticipated. Some years before the publication of *Vanity Fair*, he told me, whilst passing a day with me in the country, that he had a novel in his desk which, if published, would sell, he thought, to about seven hundred copies. Could this have been *Vanity Fair*? I rather think it must have been.

I dwell the more upon this point, because it appears to me to be a key to a certain characteristic of his writing, the constant introduction of the "non tant à soi" both as regards things in general, and his own incubations upon them. His first sobriquet of "Michael Angelo Titmarsh" had a great deal of meaning for those who knew him well. His benevolent won-

serious and sublime ; he was too familiar with, too much a master of, the humorous, to think as much about that mastery as his admirers did. I have heard him speak in terms of homage to the genius of Keats which he would not have vouchsafed to the whole tribe of humorists. But when he himself launched out of the playful into the serious, how often do we find him half "mocking himself and scorning his spirit," not for "smiling," but for the contrary. He seems to shrink from the idea of incurring the satire conveyed in these lines of Churchill :

When humour was thy province, for some crime
Pride struck thee with the frenzy of sublime.

And he descends quickly again to the humorous, where he fancied himself, though perhaps he was not, more at home.

Let me be pardoned for this excursion, if I have struck upon a key which has been missed in the general criticisms on Thackeray, by those who knew little or nothing of his early character.



Men are reluctant enough—boys, perhaps even more than allow more than one forte to the same individual; all would have accorded two to Thackeray. First and foremost, his power of drawing, especially caricature ; it was probably the high esteem in which this was held by his friends and schoolfellow, that led him afterwards to think of the pencil as a resource before the pen. Leech, at Charterhouse, was too much his junior to copy with him, and as he was, fairly speaking in drawing of an

amusing kind: indeed very much of his time was taken up with it. I have now in my possession a great number of his sketches and drawings, long carefully guarded in affectionate remembrance of those early days, when I little anticipated the fame of the draughtsman. It is from these that the illustrations which give its principal value to this little memorial are taken. It seems to me sometimes, as I look them over, that his power of drawing fell rather back as he advanced in authorship; at least, in his early drawings the types were much more varied, indeed they seemed scarcely to have any limit. On the preceding page are two examples; another will be found on the last page: they are copied with the closest accuracy.

From Homer, from Horace, from Scott's poems, from Cooper's novels, from any author he happened to have in hand, he found subject for fantastic and humorous illustrations; whilst we looked on, wondering at the quickness of his brain and fingers.



Old King Cole

Thackeray was decidedly musical as a boy, and had a capital one; but just as he disliked formal speaking, so it was his nature to shrink from

the small amount of personal display involved in singing a song—i. e., after the age of self-consciousness. In short, he was highly nervous in all such matters, and could never,

I think, in his earlier years, be made anything of as a small "show-child of genius." However, if a schoolfellow hummed or whistled the air of one of his favourite songs, it would often set him embodying its subject in the manner shown on this and the preceding page.



Strike Strike the light Guitar

which has been called cynicism in his writings, as I venture to think, untruly? There was no bitterness in him, and genial good-nature prevented his satire from any sharp biting of individuals. No one was over freer from what old Johnson tersely calls "a diligent cultivation of the power of dislike." In after-life he was one of the right kind of satirists; not of the family of Diogenes, who went about with a lanthorn in search of an honest man, whom he would have been vastly disappointed to have found, but rather akin to Talus of the *Faerie Queen*, who, for the sake of justice and humanity, lays about him with his flail at all kinds of rascality. His onslaughts were, to use the words of a great artist and satirist before him,—

Figlie d'umanità più che di sogno.*

Our greatest satirists, whether in prose or verse, with one or two exceptions, have not been bad or unkind men, but the contrary.

There are very few, I believe, who have acted more faithfully up to what they thought and wrote than Thackeray did. Instances of the contrary in great writers are endless. I will take one: Goldsmith's Essays are an epitome of keen observation, sound common sense, and

* Perhaps Salvator Rosa might more properly have called his satires "Children of Humanity and of Indignation." When Thackeray chose to smile at human faults and follies, it was not from any want of earnest feeling, for his nature was affectionate, and his sense of the "just and unjust" most keen. Statesmen have interpreted his character from his writings; friends, his writings from his character: the latter have done him the most justice. He had attributes that never belonged to any "genie." First and foremost, he delighted in the happiness of others, was quite an apostle of early marriage, and sympathised in its joys and trials. "Il joueait dans le cœur des autres." He gave his warm approbation to those only of our great writers who were really worthy as men, and had an evident contempt for authors of the two cynical characters, i.e., in their several ways, Swift and Sterne.

worldly wisdom ; his life was full of imprudences and weakness. Though sadly swindled in early life, from too much generous confidence, Thackeray had great practical common sense; nor was the following up of the word by the deed easy in his case, for his conceptions of the just and the generous were of heroic compass. One consequence, however, of this was, that every "break-down" of human nature striving after good, contributed rather to feed that *vive la bagatelle* feeling, to which other peculiarities of his mind also tended, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere.

Thackeray had an intense dislike for anything like meanness, shabbiness, pretentiousness, or tyranny, and a very quick eye for discovering them ; he had, too, just a smack of social pride, which led him afterwards, in his *Snob Papers*, to deal rather hard measure not merely to snobs in heart and feeling, but to sheer imbecility, foolish dressing, and helpless ignorance of conventional manners and good breeding. This, however, be it observed, never prevented him in his days of prosperity from holding out the hand of aid and fellowship to men his inferiors in what is usually called social position. Let me add that it was his high gentlemanlike feeling which, in spite of great natural love of ease, saved him from that lapse into a state of dependence into which a vast number of men of genius have been content to fall, which made him trust to himself, whilst he aided others, and wrestle with the dark angel of adversity till she brightened and blessed him.

A kindred accomplishment to that of caricaturing was his art of parody, afterwards brought to a climax in his imitations of eminent novelists. This, however, he practised rarely, comparatively speaking. I subjoin what I believe to have been about his earliest essay in this line ; it has never, I think, been in print. He must have been about fourteen when it was written. The parody I copy from memory ; for the original I have been obliged to refer to poor L. E. L.'s poems, who in those days wrote in the *Literary Gazette*, where I fancy Thackeray caught sight of the lines, and thought them over-sentimental.

VIOLETS.

Violets ! deep blue violets !
April's loveliest aranoids :
There are no flowers grow in the vale,
Kissed by the sun, wroth by the gale,
None with the dew of the twilight wet,
So sweet as the deep blue violet.

I do remember how sweet a broath
Came with the same light of a wreath,
That hung round the wild harp's golden chords
That rung to my dark-eyed lover's words :
I have seen that dear harp ruled
With gams of the West and hands of gold,
But it never was sweeter than when set
With leaves of the dark blue violet.

And when the grave shall open for me—
I care not how soon that time may be—
Never a rose shall blow on my brest,
It breathes too much of hope and threnos ;
But let me have there the mock regale
Of the bunting and deep blue violet.

CABBAGES.

Cabbages ! bright green cabbages !
April's loveliest gifts, I guess,
There is not a plant in the garden laid,
Raised by the dung, dug by the spade,
None by the gardener watered, I wern,
So sweet as the cabbage, the cabbage green.

I do remember how sweet a smill
Came with the cabbage I loved so well,
Served up with the beef that beautiful looked,
The beef that the dark-eyed Eliza cooked.
I have seen beef served with radish of course,
I have seen beef served with lettuce of Cox,
But it is far nicer, far pleaser, I guess,
As bubble and squeak, beef and cabbage.

And when the dinner-bell sounds for me—
I care not how soon that time may be—
Carrots shall never be served on my cloth ;
They are far too sweet for a boy of my broath ;
But let me have there a mighty mess
Of smoking hot beef and cabbage.

If the reader can bring to his own mind an instance of biography in which the school-boy *bon-mots* of a great man have been carefully recorded, he may blame me for not making here a record of Thackeray's. They have passed away with the hours which they enlivened, and the laughter, or more often the smiles, that they raised. He was, as may easily be believed, our great humorist, and touched most of our weak points good-naturedly and without offence. Nothing in character escaped him.*

He was not, I think, in those days an inventor of stories ; certainly I never knew him try his hand at a plot ; this power was gained afterwards, and gradually, as must be very evident to those who have followed his works in their series. He was an omnivorous reader, that is, of good English books ; a trashy volume he would have thrown down in five minutes. His taste selected good books, and so his style was in a continual course of formation on good models. Memoirs, moralists like Addison and Goldsmith, and fiction and poetry from the best hands, were his favourites ; but in those days he never worked in earnest at anything serious in the way of composition, or put his power to the stretch in any way.

We took in the Magazines—*Blackwood*, the *New Monthly*, the *London*, and the *Literary Gazette*—then in nearly their first glory, and full of excellent articles. I do not know who first suggested this, or whether it was a common thing for the senior boys at the public schools to club together for any such purpose ; probably not, from the incuriosity about such reading that generally prevailed at one at least of the universities. I am sure there was very little indeed of any such leaven in the mingled mass of undergraduates of my own college. It was a positive intellectual descent from the school set to which Thackeray belonged to the ordinary college level, and a very considerable one. With the exception of a small group here and there, a knowledge of and interest in the better kinds of contemporary literature was very rare indeed at the colleges.

It is uncertain what college tutors or schoolmasters may think of Magazine reading for their pupils ; to the set of whom I am now speaking my belief is that it was most advantageous, and that it proved to be a very strong stimulus of literary curiosity and ambition. The constantly fresh monthly or weekly supply of short articles seemed to bring home the fact of literary production, and made it appear, in some degree, within reach. This was the real commencement of Thackeray's connection with the Magazines, which he used to read with the greatest eagerness, little inter-

* As unwise, but not insignificant notes of character, it may be added that Thackeray always dressed plainly but well, and had no turn to foppery. To those who had the charge of him he was kindly, good-natured, and reasonable, having, in spite of all his high spirits, no kind of youthful terrors, either to juniors or seniors. Fully fit for temper, and also by an acute sense of the ridiculous in conduct, he was saved from a good many of the absurdities which, among boys, come or come, as the case may be.

ferred with by any school responsibilities. No doubt he often then thought what a pleasant thing it would be to be one of the guild, and first felt that "indrawing into the sea" of letters, which he afterwards obeyed. This kind of reading, too, led to much youthful criticism of the topics and merits of the "periodical" men of the day; the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh* only being rather too high and dry for us.

"Uva uvam spectans maturescit;"—grape ripens grape, and the finest are by no means the first ripe. If this life were the "be all and end all," we might sometimes fancy that many good and clever men have been brought into the world chiefly for the maturation of others. Thackeray was by no means unindebted to the boys amongst whom he happened to be thrown, for those of his own age and a little older were of high promise, and could fully understand him and sympathize with him. What havoc has time made in that party, always a small one!

Ewbank, who was one of the oldest, and, in the school sense, one of the best Charterhouse men, and a medallist, when Charterhouse was one of our largest public schools, has long slept in a grave amongst the rocks of Sinai. He was a true scholar, and more than that, a man of worth, genius, and taste, by no means limited to *Aeschylus* and *Tacitus*, but equally well up in Shakspeare and Milton; his classical and English scholarship twined gracefully together: he was one of Thackeray's ripeners.

Carne was nearer Thackeray's age, and a good English verse writer, rather in Praed's manner. He could recite Walter Scott, Southey, and Pope's *Homer* without limit; could give and take well in a contest of wit, and was a capital speaker. He was said to have been afterwards the best of the Cambridge Union in his day—a sadly short one: he died of decline at Madeira, I believe before he had taken his degree.

Stoddart, who was, perhaps, Thackeray's greatest favourite of all, afterwards fellow and tutor of St. John's College, Oxford, lies in the English cemetery at Genoa; one of the most noble-hearted men I ever knew, and one of the faithfulest friends: as such he was cherished to the last by Thackeray. He brought from home anecdotes of the men in whom we were interested—of Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, and Hazlitt, with all of whom his father, Sir John Stoddart, was closely intimate. How well I remember his bringing in the first series of Hood's *Whims and Oddities*, then a new book, and how we all crowded round him! He was well read and quiet, and had an infinite relish for Thackeray's humour.

Gardiner too, afterwards M.P. for Leicester, was one of us: he was rather a junior, a very clever fellow, and one who entertained a great reverence for Thackeray. He faced the House of Commons boldly enough when a very young man, but has confessed to me that he never could get over his awe of Thackeray's power of sarcasm, though he had never been seriously hurt by it. He, too, is gone, and like poor Stoddart, preceded Thackeray.

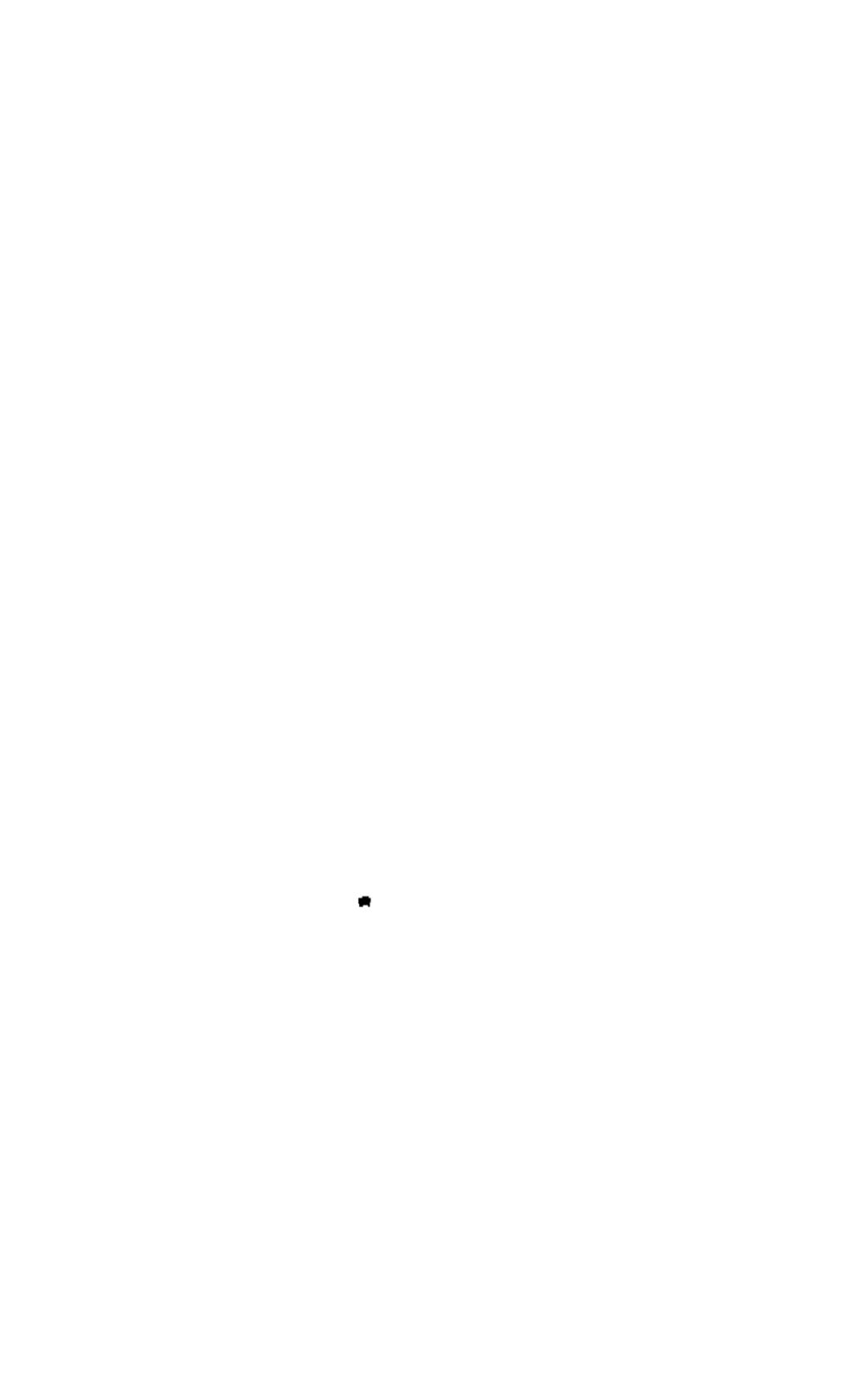
Then there was another junior, my old and most valued friend Poynder, now the second master of Charterhouse.

James Young, too, survives, of ready wit, kind, good-natured and light-hearted, far fitter than I am to give a sketch of those days; but he has, perhaps, already thrown his stone on the cairn of his old school-fellow.

A few other names might be added, were it not for fear of exhausting the reader's patience. However, of those who survive, if any should cast their eyes over this sketch, they must acknowledge the substantial truth of it, whatever they may think of the few inferences I have ventured to draw from facts which they must recognize. According the highest honour to the character and genius of my old friend, I do not allow myself to dilate on that ample theme, but close here my record of what he was as a school-boy.

J. F. B.







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T H E

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FEBRUARY, 1865.

Armadale.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHADOW OF THE PAST.



O

NL stepping back under the dark shelter of the bulwark, and one standing out boldly in the yellow light of the moon, the two friends turned face to face on the deck of the timber-ship, and looked at each other in silence. The next moment Allan's inveterate recklessness seized on the grotesque side of the situation by main force. He seated himself astride on the bulwark, and burst out boisterously into his loudest and heartiest laugh.

"All my fault," he said; "but there's no help for it now. Here we are, hard and fast in a trap of our own setting—and there goes the last of the doctor's boat! Come out of the dark, Midwinter; I can't half see you there, and I want to know what's to be done next."

Midwinter neither answered nor moved. Allan left the bulwark, and, mounting the forecastle, looked down attentively at the system of the shadows.

"One thing is pretty certain," he said. "With the current on that side, and the sunken rocks on this, we can't find our way out of the scrape by swimming, at any rate. So much for the prospect at this end of the wreck. Let's try how things look at the other. Rouse up, messmate!" he called out cheerfully, as he passed Midwinter. "Come and see what the old tub of a timber-ship has got to show us, astern." He sauntered on, with his hands in his pockets, humming the chorus of a comic song.

His voice had produced no apparent effect on his friend; but, at the light touch of his hand, in passing, Midwinter started, and moved out slowly from the shadow of the bulwark. "Come along!" cried Allan, suspending his singing for a moment, and glancing back. Still, without a word of answer, the other followed. Thrice he stopped before he reached the stern end of the wreck: the first time, to throw aside his hat, and push back his hair from his forehead and temples; the second time, reeling giddily, to hold for a moment by a ring-bolt close at hand; the last time (though Allan was plainly visible a few yards a-head), to look stealthily behind him, with the furtive scrutiny of a man who believes that other footsteps are following him in the dark. "Not yet!" he whispered to himself, with eyes that searched the empty air. "I shall see him astern, with his hand on the lock of the cabin door."

The stern end of the wreck was clear of the ship-breaker's lumber, accumulated in the other parts of the vessel. Here, the one object that rose visible on the smooth surface of the deck, was the low wooden structure which held the cabin door, and roofed in the cabin stairs. The wheel-house had been removed, the binnacle had been removed; but the cabin entrance, and all that belonged to it, had been left untouched. The scuttle was on, and the door was closed.

On gaining the after-part of the vessel, Allan walked straight to the stern, and looked out to sea over the taffrail. No such thing as a boat was in view anywhere on the quiet moon-brightened waters. Knowing Midwinter's sight to be better than his own, he called out, "Come up here, and see if there's a fisherman within hail of us." Hearing no reply, he looked back. Midwinter had followed him as far as the cabin, and had stopped there. He called again, in a louder voice, and beckoned impatiently. Midwinter had heard the call, for he looked up—but he never stirred from his place. There he stood, ~~when he~~ having reached the utmost limits of the ship and could go no further.

Allan went back and joined him. It was not easy to discover what he was looking at, for he kept his face turned away from the moonlight; but it seemed as if his eyes were fixed, with a strange expression of inquiry, on the cabin door. "What is there to look at there?" Allan asked. "Let's see if it's locked." As he took a step forward to open the door, Midwinter's hand seized him suddenly by the coat-collar and forced him back. The moment after, the hand relaxed, without losing its grasp, and trembled violently, like the hand of a man completely unstrung.

"Am I to consider myself in custody?" asked Allan, half astonished and half amused. "Why, in the name of wonder, do you keep staring at the cabin door? Any suspicious noises below? It's no use disturbing the rats—if that's what you mean—we haven't got a dog with us. Men? Living men they can't be; for they would have heard us and come on deck. Dead men? Quite impossible! No ship's crew could be drowned in a landlocked place like this, unless the vessel broke up under them—and here's the vessel as steady as a church to speak for herself. Man alive, how your hand trembles! What is there to scare you in that rotten old cabin? What are you shaking and shivering about? Any company of the supernatural sort on board? Mercy preserve us! (as the old women say,) do you see a ghost?"

"*I see two!*" answered the other, driven headlong into speech and action by a maddening temptation to reveal the truth. "Two!" he repeated, his breath bursting from him in deep, heavy gasps, as he tried vainly to force back the horrible words "The ghost of a man like you, drowning in the cabin! And the ghost of a man like me, turning the lock of the door on him!"

Once more, young Armadale's hearty laughter rang out loud and long through the stillness of the night.

"Turning the lock of the door, is he?" said Allan, as soon as his merriment left him breath enough to speak. "That's a devilish unhandsome action, Master Midwinter, on the part of your ghost. The least I can do, after that, is to let mine out of the cabin, and give him the run of the ship."

With no more than a momentary exertion of his superior strength, he freed himself easily from Midwinter's hold. "Below there!" he called out gaily, as he laid his strong hand on the crazy lock, and tore open the cabin door. "Ghost of Allan Armadale, come on deck!" In his terrible ignorance of the truth, he put his head into the doorway, and looked down, laughing, at the place where his murdered father had died "Pah!" he exclaimed, stepping back suddenly, with a shudder of disgust. "The air is foul already—and the cabin is full of water."

It was true. The sunken rocks on which the vessel lay wrecked had burst their way through her lower timbers astern, and the water had welled up through the rifted wood. Here, where the deed had been done, the fatal parallel between past and present was complete. What the cabin had been in the time of the fathers, that the cabin was now in the time of the sons.

Allan pushed the door to again with his foot, a little surprised at the sudden silence which appeared to have fallen on his friend, from the moment when he had laid his hand on the cabin lock. When he turned to look, the reason of the silence was instantly revealed. Midwinter had dropped on the deck. He lay senseless before the cabin door; his face turned up, white and still, to the moonlight, like the face of a dead man.

In a moment, Allan was at his side. He looked uneasily round the

lonely limits of the wreck, as he lifted Midwinter's head on his knee, for a chance of help, where all chance was ruthlessly cut off. "What am I to do?" he said to himself, in the first impulse of alarm. "Not a drop of water near, but the foul water in the cabin." A sudden recollection crossed his memory; the florid colour rushed back over his face; and he drew from his pocket a wicker-covered flask. "God bless the doctor for giving me this before we sailed!" he broke out fervently, as he poured down Midwinter's throat some drops of the raw whiskey which the flask contained. The stimulant acted instantly on the sensitive system of the swooning man. He sighed faintly, and slowly opened his eyes. "Have I been dreaming?" he asked, looking up vacantly in Allan's face. His eyes wandered higher, and encountered the dismantled masts of the wreck rising weird and black against the night sky. He shuddered at the sight of them, and hid his face on Allan's knee. "No dream!" he murmured to himself, mournfully. "Oh me, no dream!"

"You have been over-tired all day," said Allan; "and this infernal adventure of ours has upset you. Take some more whiskey—it's sure to do you good. Can you sit by yourself, if I put you against the bulwark, so?"

"Why by myself? Why do you leave me?" asked Midwinter.

Allan pointed to the mizen shrouds of the wreck, which were still left standing. "You are not well enough to rough it here till the workmen come off in the morning," he said. "We must find our way on shore at once, if we can. I am going up to get a good view all round, and see if there's a house within hail of us."

Even in the moment that passed while those few words were spoken, Midwinter's eyes wandered back distrustfully to the fatal cabin door. "Don't go near it!" he whispered. "Don't try to open it, for God's sake!"

"No, no," returned Allan, humouring him. "When I come down from the rigging, I'll come back here." He said the words a little constrainedly; noticing, for the first time while he now spoke, an underlying distress in Midwinter's face, which grieved and perplexed him. "You're not angry with me?" he said, in his simple, sweet-tempered way. "All this is my fault, I know—and I was a brute and a fool to laugh at you, when I ought to have seen you were ill. I am so sorry, Midwinter. Don't be angry with me!"

Midwinter slowly raised his head. His eyes rested with a mournful interest, long and tenderly on Allan's anxious face.

"Angry?" he repeated, in his lowest, gentlest tones. "Angry with you?—Oh, my poor boy, were you to blame for being kind to me when I was ill in the old weat-country inn? And was I to blame for feeling your kindness thankfully? Was it our fault that we never doubted each other, and never knew that we were travelling together blindfold on the way that was to lead us here? The cruel time is coming, Allan, when we shall rue the day we ever met. Shake hands, brother, on the edge of the precipice—shake hands while we are brothers still?"

Allan turned away quickly, convinced that his mind had not yet recovered the shock of the fainting fit. "Don't forget the whiskey!" he said cheerfully, as he sprang into the rigging, and mounted to the mizen-top.

It was past two; the moon was waning; and the darkness that comes before dawn was beginning to gather round the wreck. Behind Allan, as he now stood looking out from the elevation of the mizen-top, spread the broad and lonely sea. Before him, were the low, black, lurking rocks, and the broken waters of the Channel, pouring white and angry into the vast calm of the westward ocean beyond. On the right hand, heaved back grandly from the waterside, were the rocks and precipices, with their little table-lands of grass between; the sloping downs, and upward-rolling heath solitudes of the Isle of Man. On the left hand, rose the craggy sides of the Islet of the Calf—here, rent wildly into deep black chasms; there, lying low under long sweeping acclivities of grass and heath. No sound rose, no light was visible, on either shore. The black lines of the topmost masts of the wreck looked shadowy and faint in the darkening mystery of the sky; the land-breeze had dropped; the small shoreward waves fell noiseless: far or near, no sound was audible but the cheerless bubbling of the broken water ahead, pouring through the awful lurch of silence in which earth and ocean waited for the coming day.

Even Allan's careless nature felt the solemn influence of the time. The sound of his own voice startled him, when he looked down and hailed his friend on deck.

"I think I see one house," he said. "Hereaway, on the mainland to the right." He looked again, to make sure, at a dim little patch of white, with faint white lines behind it, nestling low in a grassy hollow, on the main island. "It looks like a stone house and enclosure," he resumed. "I'll hail it, on the chance." He passed his arm round a rope to steady himself; made a speaking-trumpet of his hands—and suddenly dropped them again without uttering a sound. "It's so awfully quiet," he whispered to himself. "I'm half afraid to call out." He looked down again on deck. "I shan't startle you, Midwinter—shall I?" he said, with an uneasy laugh. He looked once more at the faint white object in the grassy hollow. "It won't do to have come up here for nothing," he thought—and made a speaking-trumpet of his hands again. This time he gave the hail with the whole power of his lungs. "On shore there!" he shouted, turning his face to the main island. "Ahoy-hoy-hoy!"

The last echoes of his voice died away and were lost. No sound answered him but the cheerless bubbling of the broken water ahead.

He looked down again at his friend, and saw the dark figure of Midwinter rise erect, and pace the deck backwards and forwards—never disappearing out of sight of the cabin, when it retired towards the bows of the wreck; and never passing beyond the cabin, when it returned towards the stern. "He is impatient to get away," thought Allan; "I'll try again." He hailed the land once more; and, taught by previous experience, pitched his voice in its highest key.

This time, another sound than the sound of the bubbling water answered him. The lowing of frightened cattle rose from the building in the grassy hollow, and travelled far and drearily through the stillness of the morning air. Allan waited and listened. If the building was a farmhouse, the disturbance among the beasts would rouse the men. If it was only a cattle-stable, nothing more would happen. The lowing of the frightened brutes rose and fell drearily; the minutes passed—and nothing happened.

"Once more!" said Allan, looking down at the restless figure pacing beneath him. For the third time he hailed the land. For the third time he waited and listened.

In a pause of silence among the cattle, he heard behind him, on the opposite shore of the channel—faint and far among the solitudes of the Islet of the Calf—a sharp, sudden sound, like the distant clash of a heavy door-bolt drawn back. Turning at once in the new direction, he strained his eyes to look for a house. The last faint rays of the waning moonlight trembled here and there on the higher rocks, and on the steeper pinnacles of ground—but great strips of darkness lay dense and black over all the land between; and in that darkness the house, if house there were, was lost to view.

"I have roused somebody at last," Allan called out encouragingly to Midwinter, still walking to and fro on the deck, strangely indifferent to all that was passing above and beyond him. "Look out for the answering hail!" And with his face set towards the Islet, Allan shouted for help.

The shout was not answered, but mimicked with a shrill, shrieking derision—with wilder and wilder cries, rising out of the deep distant darkness, and mingling horribly the expression of a human voice with the sound of a brute's. A sudden suspicion crossed Allan's mind, which made his head swim and turned his hand cold as it held the rigging. In breathless silence he looked towards the quarter from which the first mimicry of his cry for help had come. After a moment's pause the shrieks were renewed, and the sound of them came nearer. Suddenly a figure, which seemed the figure of a man, leapt up black on a pinnacle of rock, and capered and shrieked in the waning gleam of the moonlight. The screams of a terrified woman mingled with the cries of the capering creature on the rock. A red spark flashed out in the darkness from a light kindled in an invisible window. The hoarse shouting of a man's voice in anger, was heard through the noise. A second black figure leapt up on the rock, struggled with the first figure, and disappeared with it in the darkness. The cries grew fainter and fainter—the screams of the woman were stilled—the hoarse voice of the man was heard again for a moment, hailing the wreck in words made unintelligible by the distance, but in tones plainly expressive of rage and fear combined. Another moment, and the clang of the door-bolt was heard again; the red spark of light was quenched in darkness; and all the islet lay quiet in the shadows once more. The lowing of the cattle on the mainland ceased—

rose again—stopped. Then, cold and cheerless as ever, the eternal bubbling of the broken water welled up through the great gap of silence—the one sound left, as the mysterious stillness of the hour fell like a mantle from the heavens, and closed over the wreck.

Allan descended from his place in the mizen-top, and joined his friend again on deck.

"We must wait till the ship-breakers come off to their work," he said, meeting Midwinter half way in the course of his restless walk. "After what has happened, I don't mind confessing that I've had enough of hailing the land. Only think of there being a madman in that house ashore, and of my waking him! Horrible, wasn't it?"

Midwinter stood still for a moment, and looked at Allan, with the perplexed air of a man who hears circumstances familiarly mentioned, to which he is himself a total stranger. He appeared, if such a thing had been possible, to have passed over entirely without notice, all that had just happened on the Islet of the Calf.

"Nothing is horrible *out* of this ship," he said. "Everything is horrible *in* it."

Answering in those strange words, he turned away again, and went on with his walk.

Allan picked up the flask of whiskey lying on the deck near him, and revived his spirits with a dram. "Here's one thing on board that isn't horrible," he retorted briskly, as he screwed on the stopper of the flask; "and here's another," he added, as he took a cigar from his case and lit it. "Three o'clock!" he went on, looking at his watch, and settling himself comfortably on deck, with his back against the bulwark. "Daybreak isn't far off—we shall have the piping of the birds to cheer us up before long. I say, Midwinter, you seem to have quite got over that unlucky fainting fit. How you do keep walking! Come here and have a cigar, and make yourself comfortable. What's the good of tramping backwards and forwards in that restless way?"

"I am waiting," said Midwinter.

"Waiting! What for?"

"For what is to happen to you or to me—or to both of us—before we are out of this ship."

"With submission to your superior judgment, my dear fellow, I think quite enough has happened already. The adventure will do very well as it stands now; more of it is more than I want." He took another dram of whiskey, and rambled on, between the puffs of his cigar, in his usual easy way. "I've not got your fine imagination, old boy; and I hope the next thing that happens will be the appearance of the workmen's boat. I suspect that queer fancy of yours has been running away with you, while you were down here all by yourself. Come now! what were you thinking of while I was up in the mizen-top frightening the cows?"

Midwinter suddenly stopped. "Suppose I tell you?" he said.

"Suppose you do?"

The torturing temptation to reveal the truth, roused once already by his companion's merciless gaiety of spirit, possessed itself of Midwinter for the second time. He leaned back in the dark against the high side of the ship, and looked down in silence at Allan's figure, stretched comfortably on the deck. "Rouse him," the fiend whispered subtly, "from that ignorant self-possession, and that pitiless repose. Show him the place where the deed was done; let him know it with your knowledge, and fear it with your dread. Tell him of the letter you burnt, and of the words no fire can destroy, which are living in your memory now. Let him see your mind as it was yesterday, when it roused your sinking faith in your own convictions, to look back on your life at sea, and to cherish the comforting remembrance that, in all your voyages, you had never fallen in with this ship. Let him see your mind as it is now, when the ship has got you at the turning-point of your new life, at the outset of your friendship with the one man of all men whom your father warned you to avoid. Think of those death-bed words, and whisper them in his ear, that he may think of them too:—' Hide yourself from him under an assumed name. Put the mountains and the seas between you; be ungrateful, be unsforgiving; be all that is most repellent to your own gentler nature, rather than live under the same roof and breathe the same air with that man.' " So the tempter counselled. So, like a noisome exhalation from the father's grave, the father's influence rose and poisoned the mind of the son.

The sudden silence surprised Allan; he looked back drowsily over his shoulder. "Thinking again!" he exclaimed, with a weary yawn.

Midwinter stepped out from the shadow, and came nearer to Allan than he had come yet. "Yes," he said, "thinking of the past and the future."

"The past and the future?" repeated Allan, shifting himself comfortably into a new position. "For my part I'm dumb about the past. It's a sore subject with me—the past means the loss of the doctor's boat. Let's talk about the future. Have you been taking a practical view? as dear old Brock calls it. Have you been considering the next serious question that concerns us both when we get back to the hotel—the question of breakfast?"

After an instant's hesitation, Midwinter took a step nearer. "I have been thinking of your future and mine," he said; "I have been thinking of the time when your way in life, and my way in life, will be two ways instead of one."

"Here's the daybreak!" cried Allan. "Look up at the masts; they're beginning to get clear again already. I beg your pardon. What were you saying?"

Midwinter made no reply. The struggle between the hereditary superstition that was driving him on, and the unconquerable affection for Allan that was holding him back, suspended the next words on his lips. He turned aside his face in speechless suffering. "Oh, my father!" he

thought, "better have killed me on that day when I lay on your bosom, than have let me live for this!"

"What's that about the future?" persisted Allan. "I was looking for the daylight; I didn't hear."

Midwinter controlled himself, and answered, "You have treated me with your usual kindness," he said, "in planning to take me with you to Thorpe-Ambrose. I think, on reflection, I had better not intrude myself where I am not known, and not expected." His voice faltered, and he stopped again. The more he shrank from it, the clearer the picture of the happy life that he was resigning rose on his mind.

Allan's thoughts instantly reverted to the mystification about the new steward, which he had practised on his friend when they were consulting together in the cabin of the yacht. "Has he been turning it over in his mind?" wondered Allan; "and is he beginning at last to suspect the truth? I'll try him.—Talk as much nonsense, my dear fellow, as you like," he rejoined, "but don't forget that you are engaged to see me established at Thorpe-Ambrose, and to give me your opinion of the new steward."

Midwinter suddenly stepped forward again, close to Allan.

"I am not talking about your steward or your estate," he burst out passionately; "I am talking about myself. Do you hear? Myself! I am not a fit companion for you. You don't know who I am." He drew back into the shadowy shelter of the bulwark as suddenly as he had come out from it. "O God! I can't tell him," he said to himself, in a whisper.

For a moment, and for a moment only, Allan was surprised. "Not know who you are?" Even as he repeated the words, his easy good-humour got the upper hand again. He took up the whiskey-flask, and shook it significantly. "I say," he resumed, "how much of the doctor's medicine did you take while I was up in the mizen-top?"

The light tone which he persisted in adopting, stung Midwinter to the last pitch of exasperation. He came out again into the light, and stamped his foot angrily on the deck. "Listen to me!" he said. "You don't know half the low things I have done in my life-time. I have been a tradesman's drudge; I have swept out the shop and put up the shutters; I have carried parcels through the street, and waited for my master's money at his customers' doors."

"I have never done anything half as useful," returned Allan, composedly. "Dear old boy, what an industrious fellow you have been in your time!"

"I've been a vagabond and a blackguard in my time," returned the other, fiercely; "I've been a street-tumbler, a tramp, a gipsy's boy! I've sung for halfpence with dancing dogs on the high-road! I've worn a foot-boy's livery, and waited at table! I've been a common sailors' cook, and a starving fisherman's Jack-of-all-trades! What has a gentleman in your position in common with a man in mine? Can you take me into the

society at Thorpe-Ambrose? Why, my very name would be a reproach to you. Fancy the faces of your new neighbours when their footmen announce Ozias Midwinter and Allan Armadale in the same breath!" He burst into a harsh laugh, and repeated the two names again, with a scornful bitterness of emphasis which insisted pitilessly on the marked contrast between them.

Something in the sound of his laughter jarred painfully, even on Allan's easy nature. He raised himself on the deck, and spoke seriously for the first time. "A joke's a joke, Midwinter," he said, "as long as you don't carry it too far. I remember your saying something of the same sort to me once before, when I was nursing you in Somersethshire. You forced me to ask you if I deserved to be kept at arm's length by *you* of all the people in the world. Don't force me to say so again. Make as much fun of me as you please, old fellow, in any other way. *That* way hurts me."

Simple as the words were, and simply as they had been spoken, they appeared to work an instant revolution in Midwinter's mind. His impres-
sible nature recoiled as from some sudden shock. Without a word of reply, he walked away by himself to the forward part of the ship. He sat down on some piled planks between the masts, and passed his hand over his head in a vacant, bewildered way. Though his father's belief in Fatality was his own belief once more—though there was no longer the shadow of a doubt in his mind that the woman whom Mr. Brock had met in Somersethshire, and the woman who had tried to destroy herself in London, were one and the same—though all the horror that mastered him when he first read the letter from Wildbad, had now mastered him again, Allan's appeal to their past experience of each other had come home to his heart, with a force more irresistible than the force of his superstition itself. In the strength of that very superstition, he now sought the pretext which might encourage him to sacrifice every less generous feeling to the one predominant dread of wounding the sympathies of his friend. "Why distress him?" he whispered to himself. "We are not at the end here—there is the Woman behind us in the dark. Why resist him when the mischief's done, and the caution comes too late? What is to be will be. What have I to do with the future? and what has he?"

He went back to Allan, sat down by his side, and took his hand. "Forgive me," he said, gently; "I have hurt you for the last time." Before it was possible to reply, he snatched up the whiskey-flask from the deck. "Come!" he exclaimed, with a sudden effort to match his friend's cheerfulness; "you have been trying the doctor's medicine, why shouldn't I?"

Allan was delighted. "This is something like a change for the better," he said; "Midwinter is himself again. Hark! there are the birds. Hail, smiling morn! smiling morn!" He sang the words of the glee, in his old cheerful voice, and clapped Midwinter on the shoulder in his old hearty way. "How did you manage to clear your head of

those confounded meagrims? Do you know you were quite alarming about something happening to one or other of us before we were out of this ship?"

"Sheer nonsense!" returned Midwinter, contemptuously. "I don't think my head has ever been quite right since that fever; I've got a bee in my bonnet, as they say in the North. Let's talk of something else. About those people you have let the cottage to? I wonder whether the agent's account of Major Milroy's family is to be depended on? There might be another lady in the household besides his wife and his daughter."

"Oho!" cried Allan, "*you're* beginning to think of nymphs among the trees, and flirtations in the fruit-garden, *are you?* Another lady—ch? Suppose the major's family circle won't supply another? We shall have to spin that half-crown again, and toss up for which is to have the first chance with Miss Milroy."

For once Midwinter spoke as lightly and carelessly as Allan himself. "No, no," he said; "the major's landlord has the first claim to the notice of the major's daughter. I'll retire into the background and wait for the next lady who makes her appearance at Thorpe-Ambrose."

"Very good. I'll have an Address to the women of Norfolk posted in the park to that effect," said Allan. "Are you particular to a shade about size or complexion? What's your favourite age?"

Midwinter trifled with his own superstition, as a man trifles with the loaded gun that may kill him, or with the savage animal that may maim him for life. He mentioned the age (as he had reckoned it himself) of the woman in the black gown and the red Paisley shawl.

"Five-and-thirty," he said.

As the words passed his lips, his factitious spirits deserted him. He left his seat, impenetrably deaf to all Allan's efforts at rallying him on his extraordinary answer; and resumed his restless pacing of the deck in dead silence. Once more the haunting thought which had gone to and fro with him in the hour of darkness, went to and fro with him now in the hour of daylight. Once more the conviction possessed itself of his mind that something was to happen to Allan or to himself before they left the wreck.

Minute by minute the light strengthened in the eastern sky; and the shadowy places on the deck of the timber-ship revealed their barren emptiness under the eye of day. As the breeze rose again, the sea began to murmur wakefully in the morning light. Even the cold bubbling of the broken water changed its cheerless note, and softened on the ear as the mellowing flood of daylight poured warm over it from the rising sun. Midwinter paused near the forward part of the ship, and recalled his wandering attention to the passing time. The cheering influences of the hour were round him, look where he might. The happy morning smile of the summer sky, so brightly merciful to the old and weary earth, lavished its all-embracing beauty even on the wreck! The dew that lay glittering on the inland fields, lay glittering on the deck; and the worn

and rusted rigging was gemmed as brightly as the fresh green leaves on shore. Insensibly, as he looked round, Midwinter's thoughts reverted to the comrade who had shared with him the adventure of the night. He returned to the after-part of the ship and spoke to Allan as he advanced. Receiving no answer, he approached the recumbent figure and looked closer at it. Left to his own resources, Allan had let the fatigues of the night take their own way with him. His head had sunk back; his hat had fallen off; he lay stretched at full length on the deck of the timber-ship, deeply and peacefully asleep.

Midwinter resumed his walk; his mind lost in doubt; his own past thoughts seeming suddenly to have grown strange to him. How darkly his forebodings had distrusted the coming time—and how harmlessly that time had come! The sun was mounting in the heavens, the hour of release was drawing nearer and nearer; and of the two Armadales imprisoned in the fatal ship, one was sleeping away the weary time, and the other was quietly watching the growth of the new day.

The sun climbed higher; the hour wore on. With the latent distrust of the wreck which still clung to him, Midwinter looked inquiringly on either shore for signs of awakening human life. The land was still lonely. The smoke-wreaths that were soon to rise from cottage chimneys, had not risen yet.

After a moment's thought he went back again to the after-part of the vessel, to see if there might be a fisherman's boat within hail, astern of them. Absorbed, for the moment, by the new idea, he passed Allan hastily, after barely noticing that he still lay asleep. One step more would have brought him to the taffrail—when that step was suspended by a sound behind him, a sound like a faint groan. He turned, and looked at the sleeper on the deck. He knelt softly, and looked closer.

"It has come!" he whispered to himself. "Not to *me*—but to *him*."

It had come, in the bright freshness of the morning; it had come, in the mystery and terror of a Dream. The face which Midwinter had last seen in perfect repose, was now the distorted face of a suffering man. The perspiration stood thick on Allan's forehead, and matted his curling hair. His partially-opened eyes showed nothing but the white of the eyeball gleaming blindly. His outstretched hands scratched and struggled on the deck. From moment to moment he moaned and muttered helplessly; but the words that escaped him were lost in the grinding and gnashing of his teeth. There he lay—so near in the body to the friend who beat over him; so far away in the spirit, that the two might have been in different worlds—there he lay, with the morning sunshine on his face, in the torture of his dream.

One question, and one only, rose in the mind of the man who was looking at him. What had the Fatality which had imprisoned him in the Wreck decreed that he should see?

Had the treachery of Sleep opened the gates of the grave to that one of the two Armadales whom the other had kept in ignorance of the

truth? Was the murder of the father revealing itself to the son—there, on the very spot where the crime had been committed—in the vision of a dream?

With that question over-shadowing all else in his mind, the son of the homicide knelt on the deck, and looked at the son of the man whom his father's hand had slain.

The conflict between the sleeping body and the waking mind was strengthening every moment. The dreamer's helpless groaning for deliverance grew louder; his hands raised themselves, and clutched at the empty air. Struggling with the all-mastering dread that still held him, Midwinter laid his hand gently on Allan's forehead. Light as the touch was, there were mysterious sympathies in the dreaming man that answered it. His groaning ceased, and his hands dropped slowly. There was an instant of suspense, and Midwinter looked closer. His breath just fluttered over the sleeper's face. Before the next breath had risen to his lips, Allan suddenly sprang up on his knees—sprang up, as if the call of a trumpet had rung on his ear, awake in an instant.

"You have been dreaming," said Midwinter, as the other looked at him wildly, in the first bewilderment of waking.

Allan's eyes began to wander about the wreck—at first vacantly; then with a look of angry surprise. "Are we here still?" he said, as Midwinter helped him to his feet. "Whatever else I do on board this infernal ship," he added, after a moment, "I won't go to sleep again!"

As he said those words, his friend's eyes searched his face in silent inquiry. They took a turn together on the deck.

"Tell me your dream," said Midwinter, with a strange tone of suspicion in his voice, and a strange appearance of abruptness in his manner.

"I can't tell it yet," returned Allan. "Wait a little till I'm my own man again."

They took another turn on the deck. Midwinter stopped, and spoke once more.

"Look at me for a moment, Allan," he said.

There was something of the trouble left by the dream, and something of natural surprise at the strange request just addressed to him, in Allan's face, as he turned it full on the speaker; but no shadow of ill-will, no lurking lines of distrust anywhere. Midwinter turned aside quickly, and hid, as he best might, an irrepressible outburst of relief.

"Do I look a little upset?" asked Allan, taking his arm, and leading him on again. "Don't make yourself nervous about me if I do. My head feels wild and giddy—but I shall soon get over it."

For the next few minutes, they walked backwards and forwards in silence—the one, bent on dismissing the terror of the dream from his thoughts; the other, bent on discovering what the terror of the dream might be. Relieved of the dream, and disengaged from it, the suspicious nature of Midwinter had leapt to its next conclusion at a bound. What,

if the sleeper had been visited by another revelation than the *révelation of the Past?* What, if the dream had opened those unturned pages in the book of the Future, which told the story of his life to come? The bare doubt that it might be so, strengthened tenfold Midwinter's longing to penetrate the mystery which Allan's silence still kept a secret from him.

"Is your head more composed?" he asked. "Can you tell me your dream now?"

While he put the question, a last memorable moment in the Adventure of the Wreck was at hand.

They had reached the stern, and were just turning again when Midwinter spoke. As Allan opened his lips to answer, he looked out mechanically to sea. Instead of replying, he suddenly ran to the taffrail, and waved his hat over his head, with a shout of exultation.

Midwinter joined him, and saw a large six-oared boat pulling straight for the channel of the Sound. A figure, which they both thought they recognized, rose eagerly in the stern-sheets, and returned the waving of Allan's hat. The boat came nearer; the steersman called to them cheerfully; and they recognized the doctor's voice.

"Thank God you're both above water!" said Mr. Hawbury, as they met him on the deck of the timber-ship. "Of all the winds of heaven, which wind blew you here?"

He looked at Midwinter, as he made the inquiry—but it was Allan who told him the story of the night; and Allan who asked the doctor for information in return. The one absorbing interest in Midwinter's mind—the interest of penetrating the mystery of the dream—kept him silent throughout. Heedless of all that was said or done about him, he watched Allan, and followed Allan, like a dog, until the time came for getting down into the boat. Mr. Hawbury's professional eye rested on him curiously, noting his varying colour, and the incessant restlessness of his hands. "I wouldn't change nervous systems with that man, for the largest fortune that could be offered me," thought the doctor as he took the boat's tiller, and gave the oarsmen their order to push off from the wreck.

Having reserved all explanations on his side until they were on their way back to Port St. Mary, Mr. Hawbury next addressed himself to the gratification of Allan's curiosity. The circumstances which had brought him to the rescue of his two guests of the previous evening were simple enough. The lost boat had been met with at sea, by some fishermen of Port Erin, on the western side of the island, who at once recognised it as the doctor's property, and at once sent a messenger to make inquiry at the doctor's house. The man's statement of what had happened had naturally alarmed Mr. Hawbury for the safety of Allan and his friend. He had immediately secured assistance; and guided by the boatman's advice, had made first for the most dangerous place on the coast—the only place, in that calm weather, in which an accident could have happened to a boat sailed by experienced men—the channel of the Sound.

After thus accounting for his welcome appearance on the scene, the doctor hospitably insisted that his guests of the evening should be his guests of the morning as well. It would still be too early when they got back for the people at the hotel to receive them, and they would find bed and breakfast at Mr. Hawbury's house.

At the first pause in the conversation between Allan and the doctor, Midwinter—who had neither joined in the talk, nor listened to the talk—touched his friend on the arm. “Are you better?” he asked in a whisper. “Shall you soon be composed enough to tell me what I want to know?”

Allan's eyebrows contracted impatiently; the subject of the dream, and Midwinter's obstinacy in returning to it, seemed to be alike distasteful to him. He hardly answered with his usual good-humour. “I suppose I shall have no peace till I tell you,” he said, “so I may as well get it over at once.”

“No!” returned Midwinter, with a look at the doctor and his oarsmen. “Not where other people can hear it—not till you and I are alone.”

“If you wish to see the last, gentlemen, of your quarters for the night,” interposed the doctor, “now is your time! the coast will shut the vessel out, in a minute more.”

In silence on the one side and on the other, the two Armadales looked their last at the fatal ship. Lonely and lost they had found the Wreck in the mystery of the summer night. Lonely and lost they left the Wreck in the radiant beauty of the summer morning.

An hour later the doctor had seen his guests established in their bed-rooms, and had left them to take their rest until the breakfast hour arrived.

Almost as soon as his back was turned, the doors of both rooms opened softly, and Allan and Midwinter met in the passage.

“Can you sleep after what has happened?” asked Allan.

Midwinter shook his head. “You were coming to my room, were you not?” he said. “What for?”

“To ask you to keep me company. What were you coming to my room for?”

“To ask you to tell me your dream.”

“Damn the dream! I want to forget all about it.”

“And I want to know all about it.”

Both paused; both refrained instinctively from saying more. For the first time since the beginning of their friendship they were on the verge of a disagreement—and that on the subject of the dream. Allan's good temper just stopped them on the brink.

“You are the most obstinate fellow alive,” he said, “but if you will know all about it, you must know all about it, I suppose. Come into my room, and I'll tell you.”

He led the way, and Midwinter followed. The door closed, and shut them in together.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHADOW OF THE FUTURE.

WHEN Mr. Hawbury joined his guests in the breakfast-room, the strange contrast of character between them which he had noticed already, was impressed on his mind more strongly than ever. One of them sat at the well-spread table, hungry and happy; ranging from dish to dish, and declaring that he had never made such a breakfast in his life. The other sat apart at the window; his cup thanklessly deserted before it was empty, his meat left ungraciously half eaten on his plate. The doctor's morning greeting to the two, accurately expressed the differing impressions which they had produced on his mind. He clapped Allan on the shoulder, and saluted him with a joke. He bowed constrainedly to Midwinter, and said, "I am afraid you have not recovered the fatigues of the night."

"It's not the night, doctor, that has damped his spirits," said Allan. "It's something I have been telling him. It is not my fault, mind. If I had only known beforehand that he believed in dreams, I wouldn't have opened my lips."

"Dreams?" repeated the doctor, looking at Midwinter directly, and addressing him under a mistaken impression of the meaning of Allan's words. "With your constitution, you ought to be well used to dreaming by this time."

"This way, doctor; you have taken the wrong turning!" cried Allan. "I'm the dreamer—not he. Don't look astonished; it wasn't in this comfortable house—it was on board that confounded timber-ship. The fact is, I fell asleep just before you took us off the wreck; and it's not to be denied that I had a very ugly dream. Well, when we got back here——"

"Why do you trouble Mr. Hawbury about a matter that cannot possibly interest him?" asked Midwinter, speaking for the first time, and speaking very impatiently.

"I beg your pardon," returned the doctor, rather sharply; "so far as I have heard, the matter does interest me."

"That's right, doctor!" said Allan. "Be interested, I beg and pray; I want you to clear his head of the nonsense he has got in it now. What do you think?—he will have it that my dream is a warning to me, to avoid certain people; and he actually persists in saying that one of those people is——himself! Did you ever hear the like of it? I took great pains; I explained the whole thing to him. I said, warning be hanged—it's all indigestion! You don't know what I ate and drank at the doctor's supper-table—I do. Do you think he would listen to me? Not he. You try him next; you're a professional man, and he must listen to you. Be a good fellow, doctor; and give me a certificate of indigestion; I'll show you my tongue with pleasure."

"The sight of your face is quite enough," said Mr. Hawbury.

"I certify, on the spot, that you never had such a thing as an indigestion in your life. Let's hear about the dream, and see what we can make of it—if you have no objection, that is to say."

Allan pointed at Midwinter with his fork.

"Apply to my friend, there," he said; "he has got a much better account of it than I can give you. If you'll believe me, he took it all down in writing from my own lips; and he made me sign it at the end, as if it was my 'last dying speech and confession,' before I went to the gallows. Out with it, old boy—I saw you put it in your pocket-book—out with it!"

"Are you really in earnest?" asked Midwinter, producing his pocket-book with a reluctance which was almost offensive under the circumstances, for it implied distrust of the doctor in the doctor's own house.

Mr. Hawbury's colour rose. "Pray don't show it to me, if you feel the least unwillingness," he said, with the elaborate politeness of an offended man.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Allan. "Throw it over here!"

Instead of complying with that characteristic request, Midwinter took the paper from the pocket-book, and, leaving his place, approached Mr. Hawbury. "I beg your pardon," he said, as he offered the doctor the manuscript with his own hand. His eyes dropped to the ground, and his face darkened, while he made the apology. "A secret, sullen fellow," thought the doctor, thanking him with formal civility—"his friend is worth ten thousand of him." Midwinter went back to the window, and sat down again in silence, with the old impenetrable resignation which had once puzzled Mr. Brock.

"Read that, doctor," said Allan, as Mr. Hawbury opened the written paper. "It's not told in my roundabout way; but there's nothing added to it, and nothing taken away. It's exactly what I dreamed, and exactly what I should have written myself, if I had thought the thing worth putting down on paper, and if I had had the knack of writing—which," included Allan, composedly stirring his coffee, "I haven't, except it's letters; and I rattle them off in no time."

Mr. Hawbury spread the manuscript before him on the breakfast-table, and read these lines :

"ALLAN ARMADALE'S DREAM.

"EARLY ON the morning of June the first, eighteen hundred and fifty-one, I found myself (through circumstances which it is not important to mention in this place) left alone with a friend of mine—a young man about my own age—on board the French timber-ship named *La Grâce de Dieu*, which ship then lay wrecked in the channel of the Sound, between the mainland of the Isle of Man and the islet called the Calf. Having not been in bed the previous night, and feeling overcome by fatigue, I fell asleep on the deck of the vessel. I was in my usual good health at the time, and the morning was far enough advanced for the sun to have risen.

Under these circumstances, and at that period of the day, I passed from sleeping to dreaming. As clearly as I can recollect it, after the lapse of a few hours, this was the succession of events presented to me by the dream :—

“ 1. The first event of which I was conscious, was the appearance of my father. He took me silently by the hand ; and we found ourselves in the cabin of a ship.

“ 2. Water rose slowly over us in the cabin ; and I and my father sank through the water together.

“ 3. An interval of oblivion followed ; and then the sense came to me of being left alone in the darkness.

“ 4. I waited.

“ 5. The darkness opened, and showed me the vision—as in a picture—of a broad, lonely pool, surrounded by open ground. Above the farther margin of the pool, I saw the cloudless western sky, red with the light of sunset.

“ 6. On the near margin of the pool, there stood the Shadow of a Woman.

“ 7. It was the shadow only. No indication was visible to me by which I could identify it, or compare it with any living creature. The long robe showed me that it was the shadow of a woman, and showed me nothing more.

“ 8. The darkness closed again—remained with me for an interval—and opened for the second time.

“ 9. I found myself in a room, standing before a long window. The only object of furniture or of ornament that I saw (or that I can now remember having seen), was a little statue placed near me. The statue was on my left hand, and the window was on my right. The window opened on a lawn and flower-garden ; and the rain was patterning heavily against the glass.

“ 10. I was not alone in the room. Standing opposite to me at the window was the Shadow of a Man.

“ 11. I saw no more of it—I knew no more of it than I saw and knew of the shadow of the woman. But the shadow of the man moved. It stretched out its arm towards the statue ; and the statue fell in fragments on the floor.

“ 12. With a confused sensation in me, which was partly anger and partly distress, I stooped to look at the fragments. When I rose again, the Shadow had vanished, and I saw no more.

“ 13. The darkness opened for the third time, and showed me the Shadow of the Woman and the Shadow of the Man, together.

“ 14. No surrounding scene (or none that I can now call to mind) was visible to me.

“ 15. The Man-Shadow was the nearest ; the Woman-Shadow stood back. From where she stood, there came a sound as of the pouring of a liquid softly. I saw her touch the shadow of the man with one hand, and

with the other give him a glass. He took the glass, and gave it to me. In the moment when I put it to my lips, a deadly faintness mastered me from head to foot. When I came to my senses again, the Shadow had vanished, and the third vision was at an end.

" 16. The darkness closed over me again ; and the interval of oblivion followed.

" 17. I was conscious of nothing more, till I felt the morning sunshine on my face, and heard my friend tell me that I had awakened from a dream."

After reading the narrative attentively to the last line (under which appeared Allan's signature) the doctor looked across the breakfast-table at Midwinter, and tapped his fingers on the manuscript with a satirical smile.

" Many men, many opinions," he said. " I don't agree with either of you about this dream. Your theory," he added, looking at Allan, with a smile, " we have disposed of already : the supper that *you* can't digest, is a supper which has yet to be discovered. My theory we will come to presently ; your friend's theory claims attention first." He turned again to Midwinter, with his anticipated triumph over a man whom he disliked a little too plainly visible in his face and manner. " If I understand rightly," he went on, " you believe that this dream is a warning, supernaturally addressed to Mr. Armandale, of dangerous events that are threatening him, and of dangerous people connected with those events, whom he would do wisely to avoid. May I inquire whether you have arrived at this conclusion, as an habitual believer in dreams?—or, as having reasons of your own for attaching especial importance to this one dream in particular ? "

" You have stated what my conviction is quite accurately," returned Midwinter, chafing under the doctor's looks and tones. " Excuse me if I ask you to be satisfied with that admission, and to let me keep my reasons to myself."

" That's exactly what he said to me," interposed Allan. " I don't believe he has got any reasons at all."

" Gently ! gently ! " said Mr. Hawbury. " We can discuss the subject, without intruding ourselves into anybody's secrets. Let us come to my own method of dealing with the dream next. Mr. Midwinter will probably not be surprised to hear that I look at this matter from an essentially practical point of view."

" I shall not be at all surprised," retorted Midwinter. " The view of a medical man, when he has a problem in humanity to solve, seldom ranges beyond the point of his dissecting-knife."

The doctor was a little nettled on his side. " Our limits are not quite so narrow as that," he said ; " but I willingly grant you that there are some articles of your faith in which we doctors don't believe. For example, we don't believe that a reasonable man is justified in attaching a supernatural interpretation to any phenomenon which comes within the

range of his senses, until he has certainly ascertained that there is no such thing as a natural explanation of it to be found in the first instance."

"Come! that's fair enough, I'm sure," exclaimed Allan. "He hit you hard with the 'dissecting-knife,' doctor; and now you have hit him back again with your 'natural explanation.' Let's have it."

"By all means," said Mr. Hawbury; "here it is. There is nothing at all extraordinary in my theory of dreams: it is the theory accepted by the great mass of my profession. A Dream is the reproduction, in the sleeping state of the brain, of images and impressions produced on it in the waking state; and this reproduction is more or less involved, imperfect, or contradictory, as the action of certain faculties in the dreamer is controlled more or less completely by the influence of sleep. Without inquiring farther into this latter part of the subject—a very curious and interesting part of it—let us take the theory, roughly and generally, as I have just stated it, and apply it at once to the dream now under consideration." He took up the written paper from the table, and dropped the formal tone (as of a lecturer addressing an audience) into which he had insensibly fallen. "I see one event already in this dream," he resumed, "which I know to be the reproduction of a waking impression produced on Mr. Armadale in my own presence. If he will only help me by exerting his memory, I don't despair of tracing back the whole succession of events set down here, to something that he has said or thought, or seen or done, in the four-and-twenty hours, or less, which preceded his falling asleep on the deck of the timber-ship."

"I'll exert my memory with the greatest pleasure," said Allan. "Where shall we start from?"

"Start by telling me what you did yesterday, before I met you and your friend on the road to this place," replied Mr. Hawbury. "We will say, you got up and had your breakfast. What next?"

"We took a carriage next," said Allan, "and drove from Castletown to Douglas to see my old friend, Mr. Brock, off by the steamer to Liverpool. We came back to Castletown, and separated at the hotel door. Midwinter went into the house, and I went on to my yacht in the harbour.—By the by, doctor, remember you have promised to go cruising with us before we leave the Isle of Man."

"Many thanks—but suppose we keep to the matter in hand. What next?"

Allan hesitated. In both senses of the word his mind was at sea already.

"What did you do on board the yacht?"

"Oh, I know! I put the cabin to rights—thoroughly to rights. I give you my word of honour, I turned every blessed thing topsy-turvy. And my friend there came off in a shore-boat and helped me.—Talking of boats, I have never asked you yet whether your boat came to any harm last night. If there's any damage done, I insist on being allowed to repair it."

The doctor abandoned all further attempts at the cultivation of Allan's memory in despair.

"I doubt if we shall be able to reach our object conveniently in this way," he said. "It will be better to take the events of the dream in their regular order, and to ask the questions that naturally suggest themselves as we go on. Here are the first two events to begin with. You dream that your father appears to you—that you and he find yourselves in the cabin of a ship—that the water rises over you, and that you sink in it together. Were you down in the cabin of the wreck, may I ask?"

"I couldn't be down there," replied Allan, "as the cabin was full of water. I looked in and saw it, and shut the door again."

"Very good," said Mr. Hawbury. "Here are the waking impressions clear enough, so far. You have had the cabin in your mind, and you have had the water in your mind; and the sound of the channel current (as I well know without asking) was the last sound in your ears when you went to sleep. The idea of drowning comes too naturally out of such impressions as these to need dwelling on. Is there anything else before we go on? Yes; there is one more circumstance left to account for."

"The most important circumstance of all," remarked Midwinter, joining in the conversation, without stirring from his place at the window.

"You mean the appearance of Mr. Armadale's father? I was just coming to that," answered Mr. Hawbury. "Is your father alive?" he added, addressing himself to Allan once more.

"My father died before I was born."

The doctor started. "This complicates it a little," he said. "How did you know that the figure appearing to you in the dream was the figure of your father?"

Allan hesitated again. Midwinter drew his chair a little away from the window, and looked at the doctor attentively for the first time.

"Was your father in your thoughts before you went to sleep?" pursued Mr. Hawbury. "Was there any description of him—any portrait of him at home—in your mind?"

"Of course there was!" cried Allan, suddenly seizing the lost recollection. "Midwinter! you remember the miniature you found on the floor of the cabin when we were putting the yacht to rights? You said I didn't seem to value it; and I told you I did, because it was a portrait of my father——"

"And was the face in the dream like the face in the miniature?" asked Mr. Hawbury.

"Exactly like! I say, doctor, this is beginning to get interesting!"

"What do you say now?" asked Mr. Hawbury, turning towards the window again.

Midwinter hurriedly left his chair, and placed himself at the table with Allan. Just as he had once already taken refuge from the tyranny of his own superstition in the comfortable common sense of Mr. Brock—so, with the same headlong eagerness, with the same straightforward sincerity of

purpose, he now took refuge in the doctor's theory of dreams. "I say what my friend says," he answered, flushing with a sudden enthusiasm; "this is beginning to get interesting. Go on—pray go on."

The doctor looked at his strange guest more indulgently than he had looked yet. "You are the only mystic I have met with," he said, "who is willing to give fair evidence fair play. I don't despair of converting you before our inquiry comes to an end. Let us get on to the next set of events," he resumed, after referring for a moment to the manuscript. "The interval of oblivion which is described as succeeding the first of the appearances in the dream, may be easily disposed of. It means, in plain English, the momentary cessation of the brain's intellectual action, while a deeper wave of sleep flows over it, just as the sense of being alone in the darkness, which follows, indicates the renewal of that action, previous to the reproduction of another set of impressions. Let us see what they are. A lonely pool, surrounded by an open country; a sunset sky on the farther side of the pool; and the shadow of a woman on the near side. Very good; now for it, Mr. Armadale! How did that pool get into your head? The open country you saw on your way from Castletown to this place. But we have no pools or lakes hereabouts; and you can have seen none recently elsewhere, for you came here after a cruise at sea. Must we fall back on a picture, or a book, or a conversation with your friend?"

Allan looked at Midwinter. "I don't remember talking about pools, or lakes," he said. "Do you?"

Instead of answering the question, Midwinter suddenly appealed to the doctor.

"Have you got the last number of the Manx newspaper?" he asked.

The doctor produced it from the sideboard. Midwinter turned to the page containing those extracts from the recently published *Travels in Australia*, which had roused Allan's interest on the previous evening, and the reading of which had ended by sending his friend to sleep. There—in the passage describing the sufferings of the travellers from thirst, and the subsequent discovery which saved their lives—there, appearing at the climax of the narrative, was the broad pool of water which had figured in Allan's dream!

"Don't put away the paper," said the doctor, when Midwinter had shown it to him, with the necessary explanation. "Before we are at the end of the inquiry, it is quite possible we may want that extract again. We have got at the pool. How about the sunset? Nothing of that sort is referred to in the newspaper extract. Search your memory again, Mr. Armadale; we want your waking impression of a sunset, if you please."

Once more, Allan was at a loss for an answer; and, once more, Midwinter's ready memory helped him through the difficulty.

"I think I can trace our way back to this impression, as I traced our way back to the other," he said, addressing the doctor. "After we got

here yesterday afternoon, my friend and I took a long walk over the hills——”

“That’s it!” interposed Allan. “I remember. The sun was setting as we came back to the hotel for supper—and it was such a splendid red sky, we both stopped to look at it. And then we talked about Mr. Brock, and wondered how far he had got on his journey home. My memory may be a slow one at starting, doctor; but when it’s once set going, stop it if you can! I haven’t half done yet.”

“Wait one minute, in mercy to Mr. Midwinter’s memory and mine,” said the doctor. “We have traced back to your waking impressions, the vision of the open country, the pool, and the sunset. But the Shadow of the Woman has not been accounted for yet. Can you find us the original of this mysterious figure in the dream-landscape?”

Allan relapsed into his former perplexity, and Midwinter waited for what was to come, with his eyes fixed in breathless interest on the doctor’s face. For the first time there was unbroken silence in the room. Mr. Hawbury looked interrogatively from Allan to Allan’s friend. Neither of them answered him. Between the shadow and the shadow’s substance there was a great gulph of mystery, impenetrable alike to all three of them.

“Patience,” said the doctor, composedly. “Let us leave the figure by the pool for the present, and try if we can’t pick her up again as we go on. Allow me to observe, Mr. Midwinter, that it is not very easy to identify a shadow; but we won’t despair. This impalpable lady of the lake may take some consistency when we next meet with her.”

Midwinter made no reply. From that moment his interest in the inquiry began to flag.

“What is the next scene in the dream?” pursued Mr. Hawbury, referring to the manuscript. “Mr. Armadale finds himself in a room. He is standing before a long window opening on a lawn and flower-garden, and the rain is pattering against the glass. The only thing he sees in the room is a little statue; and the only company he has is the Shadow of a Man standing opposite to him. The Shadow stretches out its arm, and the statue falls in fragments on the floor; and the dreamer, in anger and distress at the catastrophe (observe, gentlemen, that here the sleeper’s reasoning faculty wakes up a little, and the dream passes rationally, for a moment, from cause to effect), stoops to look at the broken pieces. When he looks up again the scene has vanished. That is to say, in the ebb and flow of sleep, it is the turn of the flow now, and the brain rests a little. What’s the matter, Mr. Armadale? Has that restive memory of yours run away with you again?”

“Yes,” said Allan. “I’m off at full gallop. I’ve run the broken statue to earth; it’s nothing more nor less than a china shepherdess I knocked off the mantelpiece in the hotel coffee-room, when I rang the bell for supper last night. I say, how well we get on; don’t we? It’s like guessing a riddle. Now then, Midwinter! your turn next.”

"No!" said the doctor. "My turn, if you please. I claim the long window, the garden, and the lawn, as my property. You will find the long window, Mr. Armadale, in the next room. If you look out, you'll see the garden and lawn in front of it—and, if you'll exert that wonderful memory of yours, you will recollect that you were good enough to take special and complimentary notice of my smart French window and my neat garden, when I drove you and your friend to Port St. Mary yesterday."

"Quite right," rejoined Allan, "so I did. But what about the rain that fell in the dream? I haven't seen a drop of rain for the last week."

Mr. Hawbury hesitated. The Manx newspaper which had been left on the table caught his eye. "If we can think of nothing else," he said, "let us try if we can't find the idea of the rain where we found the idea of the pool." He looked through the extract carefully. "I have got it!" he exclaimed. "Here is rain described as having fallen on these thirsty Australian travellers, before they discovered the pool. Behold the shower, Mr. Armadale, which got into your mind when you read the extract to your friend last night! And behold the dream, Mr. Midwinter, mixing up separate waking impressions just as usual!"

"Can you find the waking impression which accounts for the human figure at the window?" asked Midwinter; "or, are we to pass over the Shadow of the Man as we have passed over the Shadow of the Woman already?"

He put the question with scrupulous courtesy of manner, but with a tone of sarcasm in his voice which caught the doctor's ear, and set up the doctor's controversial bristles on the instant.

"When you are picking up shells on the beach, Mr. Midwinter, you usually begin with the shells that lie nearest at hand," he rejoined. "We are picking up facts now; and those that are easiest to get at are the facts we will take first. Let the Shadow of the Man and the Shadow of the Woman pair off together for the present—we won't lose sight of them, I promise you. All in good time, my dear sir; all in good time!"

He too was polite, and he too was sarcastic. The short truce between the opponents was at an end already. Midwinter returned significantly to his former place by the window. The doctor instantly turned his back on the window more significantly still. Allan, who never quarrelled with anybody's opinion, and never looked below the surface of anybody's conduct, drummed cheerfully on the table with the handle of his knife. "Go on, doctor!" he called out; "my wonderful memory is as fresh as ever."

"Is it?" said Mr. Hawbury, referring again to the narrative of the dream. "Do you remember what happened, when you and I were gossiping with the landlady at the bar of the hotel last night?"

"Of course I do! You were kind enough to hand me a glass of brandy-and-water, which the landlady had just mixed for your owa drinking. And I was obliged to refuse it because, as I told

you, the taste of brandy always turns me sick and faint, mix it how you please."

"Exactly so," returned the doctor. "And here is the incident reproduced in the dream. You see the man's shadow and the woman's shadow together this time. You hear the pouring out of liquid (brandy from the hotel bottle, and water from the hotel jug); the glass is handed by the woman-shadow (the landlady) to the man-shadow (myself); the man-shadow hands it to you (exactly what I did); and the faintness (which you had previously described to me) follows in due course. I am shocked to identify these mysterious Appearances, Mr. Midwinter, with such miserably unromantic originals as a woman who keeps an hotel, and a man who physics a country district. But your friend himself will tell you that the glass of brandy-and-water was prepared by the landlady, and that it reached him by passing from her hand to mine. We have picked up the shadows, exactly as I anticipated; and we have only to account now—which may be done in two words—for the manner of their appearance in the dream. After having tried to introduce the waking impression of the doctor and the landlady separately, in connection with the wrong set of circumstances, the dreaming mind comes right at the third trial, and introduces the doctor and the landlady together, in connection with the right set of circumstances. There it is in a nutshell!—Permit me to hand you back the manuscript, with my best thanks for your very complete and striking confirmation of the rational theory of dreams." Saying those words, Mr. Hawbury returned the written paper to Midwinter, with the pitiless politeness of a conquering man.

"Wonderful! not a point missed anywhere from beginning to end! By Jupiter!" cried Allan, with the ready reverence of intense ignorance. "What a thing science is!"

"Not a point missed, as you say," remarked the doctor, complacently. "And yet I doubt if we have succeeded in convincing your friend."

"You have *not* convinced me," said Midwinter. "But I don't presume on that account to say that you are wrong."

He spoke quietly, almost sadly. The terrible conviction of the supernatural origin of the dream, from which he had tried to escape, had possessed itself of him again. All his interest in the argument was at an end; all his sensitiveness to its irritating influences was gone. In the case of any other man, Mr. Hawbury would have been mollified by such a concession as his adversary had now made to him; but he disliked Midwinter too cordially to leave him in the peaceable enjoyment of an opinion of his own.

"Do you admit," asked the doctor, more pugnaciously than ever, "that I have traced back every event of the dream to a waking impression which preceded it in Mr. Armadale's mind?"

"I have no wish to deny that you have done so," said Midwinter, resignedly.

"Have I identified the Shadows with their living originals?"

" You have identified them to your own satisfaction, and to my friend's satisfaction. Not to mine."

" Not to yours? Can you identify them?"

" No. I can only wait till the living originals stand revealed in the future."

" Spoken like an oracle, Mr. Midwinter! Have you any idea at present of who those living originals may be?"

" I have. I believe that coming events will identify the Shadow of the Woman with a person whom my friend has not met with yet; and the Shadow of the Man with myself."

Allan attempted to speak. The doctor stopped him.

" Let us clearly understand this," he said to Midwinter. " Leaving your own case out of the question for the moment, may I ask how a shadow, which has no distinguishing mark about it, is to be identified with a living woman whom your friend doesn't know?"

Midwinter's colour rose a little. He began to feel the lash of the doctor's logic.

" The landscape-picture of the dream has its distinguishing marks," he replied. " And, in that landscape, the living woman will appear when the living woman is first seen."

" The same thing will happen, I suppose," pursued the doctor, " with the man-shadow which you persist in identifying with yourself. You will be associated in the future with a statue broken in your friend's presence, with a long window looking out on a garden, and with a shower of rain pattering against the glass? Do you say that?"

" I say that."

" And so again, I presume, with the next vision? You and the mysterious woman will be brought together in some place now unknown, and will present to Mr. Armadale some liquid yet unnamed, which will turn him faint?—Do you seriously tell me you believe this?"

" I seriously tell you I believe it."

" And, according to your view, these fulfilments of the dream will mark the progress of certain coming events, in which Mr. Armadale's happiness, or Mr. Armadale's safety, will be dangerously involved?"

" That is my firm conviction."

The doctor rose—laid aside his moral dissecting-knife—considered for a moment—and took it up again.

" One last question," he said. " Have you any reason to give for going out of your way to adopt such a mystical view as this, when an unanswerably rational explanation of the dream lies straight before you?"

" No reason," replied Midwinter, " that I can give, either to you or to my friend."

The doctor looked at his watch with the air of a man who is suddenly reminded that he has been wasting his time.

" We have no common ground to start from," he said; " and if we talked till doomsday, we should not agree. Excuse my leaving you rather

abruptly. It is later than I thought; and my morning's batch of sick people are waiting for me in the surgery. I have convinced *your* mind, Mr. Armadale, at any rate; so the time we have given to this discussion has not been altogether lost. Pray stop here, and smoke your cigar. I shall be at your service again in less than an hour." He nodded cordially to Allan, bowed formally to Midwinter, and quitted the room.

As soon as the doctor's back was turned, Allan left his place at the table, and appealed to his friend, with that irresistible heartiness of manner which had always found its way to Midwinter's sympathies, from the first day when they met at the Somersetshire inn.

"Now the sparring-match between you and the doctor is over," said Allan, "I have got two words to say on my side. Will you do something for my sake which you won't do for your own?"

Midwinter's face brightened instantly. "I will do anything you ask me," he said.

"Very well. Will you let the subject of the dream drop out of our talk altogether, from this time forth?"

"Yes, if you wish it."

"Will you go a step further? Will you leave off thinking about the dream?"

"It's hard to leave off thinking about it, Allan. But I will try."

"That's a good fellow! Now give me that trumpery bit of paper, and let's tear it up, and have done with it."

He tried to snatch the manuscript out of his friend's hand; but Midwinter was too quick for him, and kept it beyond his reach.

"Come! come!" pleaded Allan. "I've set my heart on lighting my cigar with it."

Midwinter hesitated painfully. It was hard to resist Allan; but he did resist him. "I'll wait a little," he said, "before you light your cigar with it."

"How long? Till to-morrow?"

"Longer."

"Till we leave the Isle of Man?"

"Longer."

"Hang it—give me a plain answer to a plain question! How long will you wait?"

Midwinter carefully restored the paper to its place in his pocket-book.

"I'll wait," he said, "till we get to Thorpe-Ambrose."

Orvieto.

On the road from Sienna to Rome, half-way between Ficulle and Viterbo is the town of Orvieto. Travellers who hurry on in their postchaise or by the diligence, often pass it in the night-time. Few stop there, for the place is old and dirty, and its inns are indifferent. But none who see it even from a distance can fail to be struck with its imposing aspect, as it rises from the level plain upon its mass of rock among the Apennines.

Orvieto is built upon the first of those huge volcanic blocks which are found like fossils, embedded in the more recent geological formations of central Italy, and which stretch in an irregular but unbroken line to the Campagna of Rome. Many of them, like that on which Civita Castellana is perched, are surrounded by rifts and chasms, and ravines and fosses, strangely furrowed and twisted by the force of fiery convulsions. But their advanced guard, Orvieto, stands up definite and solid, an almost perfect cube, with walls precipitous to north and south and east, but slightly sloping to the westward. At its foot rolls the Paglia, one of those barren streams which swell in winter with the snows and rains of the Apennines, but which in summer-time shrink up, and leave bare beds of sand and pestilential canebreaks to stretch irregularly round their dwindled waters.

The weary flatness and utter desolation of this valley present a sinister contrast to the broad line of the Apennines, swelling tier on tier, from their oak-girdled basements set with villages and towers, up to the snow and cloud that crown their topmost crags. The time to see this landscape is at sunrise ; and the traveller should take his stand upon the rising ground over which the Roman road is carried from the town—the point, in fact, which Turner has selected for his vague and misty sketch of Orvieto in our Gallery. Thence he will command the whole space of the plain, the Apennines, and the river creeping in a straight line at the base ; while the sun, rising to his right, will slant along the mountain flanks, and gild the leaden stream, and flood the castled crags of Orvieto with a haze of light. From the centre of this glory stand out in bold relief old bastions built upon the solid tufa, vast gaping gateways black in shadow, towers of churches shooting up above a medley of deep-corniced tall Italian houses, and, amid them all, the marble front of the cathedral, calm and solemn in its unfamiliar Gothic state. Down to the valley from these heights there is a sudden fall ; and we wonder how the few spare olive-trees that grow there can support existence on the steep slope of the cliff.

Our mind, in looking at this landscape, is irresistibly carried to Jerusalem. We could fancy ourselves to be standing on Mount Olivet, with the valley of Jehosaphat between us and the Sacred City. As we approach

the town, the difficulty of scaling its crags seems insurmountable. The road, though carried skilfully along each easy slope or ledge of quarried rock, still winds so much that nearly an hour is spent in the ascent. Those who can walk should take a footpath, and enter Orvieto by the mediæval road, up which many a Pope, flying from rebellious subjects or foreign enemies, has hurried on his mule.

To unaccustomed eyes there is something sinister and terrible about the black and cindery appearance of volcanic tufa. Where it is broken, the hard and gritty edges leave little space for vegetation; while at intervals the surface spreads so smooth and straight that one might take it for solid masonry erected by the architect of Pandemonium. Rubbish and shattered bits of earthenware and ashes, thrown from the city walls, cling to every ledge and encumber the broken pavement of the footway; while as we rise, the castle battlements above appear more menacing, toppling upon the rough edge of the crag, and guarding each turn of the road with jealous loopholes or beetle-browed machicolations, until at last the gateway and portcullis are in view.

On first entering Orvieto, one's heart fails, to find so terrible a desolation, so squalid a solitude, and so vast a difference between the present and the past, between the beauty of surrounding nature and the misery of this home of men. A long space of unoccupied ground intervenes between the walls and the hovels which skirt the modern town. This, in the times of its splendour, may have served for oliveyards, vineyards, and pasturage, in case of siege. There are still some faint traces of dead gardens left upon its arid wilderness, among the ruins of a castellated palace, decorated with the cross-keys and tiara of an unremembered Pope. But now it lies a mere tract of scorched grass, insufferably hot and dry and sandy, intersected by dirty paths, and covered with the loathliest offal of a foul Italian town. Should you cross this ground at mid-day, under the blinding sun, when no living thing, except perhaps some poisonous reptile, is about, you would declare that Orvieto had been stricken for its sins by heaven. Your mind would dwell mechanically on all that you have read of Papal crimes, of fratricidal wars, of Pagan abominations in the high places of the Church, of tempestuous passions and refined iniquity—of everything, in fact, which renders Italy of the Middle Age and the Renaissance so dark and foul amid the splendours of her art and civilization. This is the natural result; this shrunken and squalid old age of poverty and self-abandonment is the end of that strong prodigal and vicious youth. Who shall restore vigour to these dead bones? we cry. If Italy is to live again, she must quit her ruined palace-towers to build fresh dwellings elsewhere. Filth, lust, rapacity, treason, godlessness and violence have made their habitation here; ghosts haunt these ruins; these streets still smell of blood, and echo to the cries of injured innocence; life cannot be pure, or calm, or healthy, where this curse has settled.

Occupied with such reflections, we reach the streets of Orvieto. They

are not very different from those of most Italian villages, except that there is little gaiety about them. Like Assisi or Sienna, Orvieto is too large for its population, and merriment flows better from close crowding than from spacious accommodation. Very dark, and big, and dirty, and deserted, is the judgment we pronounce upon the houses ; very filthy and malodorous each passage ; very long this central street ; very few, and sad, and sullen the inhabitants ; and where, we wonder, is the promised inn ? In search of this one walks nearly through the city, until one enters the Piazza, where there is more liveliness. Here caffè may be found ; soldiers, strong and sturdy, from the North, lounge at the corners ; the shops present more show ; and a huge hotel, not bad for such a place, and appropriately dedicated to the Belle Arti, standing in a courtyard of its own, receives the traveller weary with his climb. As soon as he has taken rooms, his first desire is to go forth and visit the Cathedral.

The great Duomo was erected at the end of the thirteenth century to commemorate the Miracle of Bolsena. The value of this miracle consisted in its establishing unmistakably the truth of transubstantiation. The story runs that a young Bohemian priest who doubted the dogma was performing the office of the mass in a church at Bolsena, when, at the moment of consecration, blood issued from five gashes in the wafer, which resembled the five wounds of Christ. The fact was evident to all the worshippers, who saw blood falling on the linen of the altar ; and the young priest no longer doubted, but confessed the miracle, and journeyed straightway with the evidence thereof to Pope Urban IV. The Pope, who was then at Orvieto, came out with all his retinue to meet the convert and do honour to the magic-working relics. The circumstances of this miracle are well known to students of art through Raphael's celebrated fresco in the Stanze of the Vatican. And it will be remembered by the readers of ecclesiastical history that Urban had in 1264 promulgated by a bull the strict observance of the Corpus Christi festival in connection with his strong desire to re-establish the doctrine of Christ's presence in the elements. Nor was it without reason that while seeking miraculous support for this dogma, he should have treated the affair of Bolsena so seriously as to celebrate it by the erection of one of the most splendid cathedrals in Italy ; for the peace of the Church had recently been troubled by the reforming ardour of the Fraticelli and by the promulgation of Abbot Joachim's Eternal Gospel. This new evangelist had preached the doctrine of progression in religious faith, proclaiming a kingdom of the Spirit which should transcend the kingdom of the Son, even as the Christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish supremacy of the Father. Nor did he fail at the same time to attack the political and moral abuses of the Papacy, attributing its degradation to the want of vitality which pervaded the old Christian system, and calling on the clergy to lead more simple and regenerate lives, consistently with the spiritual doctrine which he had received by inspiration. The theories of Joachim were immature and crude ; but they were the first germs of that liberal effort after self-

emancipation which eventually stirred all Europe at the time of the Renaissance. It was, therefore, the obvious policy of the Popes to crush so dangerous an opposition while they could, and by establishing the dogma of transubstantiation, they were enabled to satisfy the growing mysticism of the people, while they placed upon a firmer basis the cardinal support of their own religious power.

In pursuance of his plan, Urban sent for Lorenzo Maitani, the great Siennese architect, who gave designs for a Gothic church in the same style as the Cathedral of Sienna, though projected on a smaller scale. Fergusson, in his *Handbook of Architecture*, remarks that these two churches "are perhaps, taken altogether, the most successful specimens of Italian pointed Gothic." The Gotico Tedesco had never been received with favour in Italy. Remains of Roman architecture, then far more prevalent and perfect than they are at present, exercised an influence over the minds of artists, and induced them to admire the rounded rather than the pointed arch. Indeed, there would seem to be something peculiarly Northern in the spirit of Gothic architecture: its intricacies suit the gloom of Northern skies, its massive exterior is adapted to the severity of Northern weather, its vast windows catch the fleeting sunlight of the North, and the pinnacles and spires which constitute its beauty are better expressed in rugged stone than in the marbles of the South. Northern cathedrals do not depend for their effect upon the advantages of sunlight or picturesque situations. Many of them are built upon vast plains, over which for more than half the year hangs fog. But the cathedrals of Italy owe their charm to colour and brilliancy: their gilded sculpture and mosaics, the variegated marbles and shallow portals of their façades, the light aerial elegance of their campanili, are all adapted to an atmosphere of perpetual splendour, where changing effects of natural beauty distract the attention from solidity of design and permanence of grandeur in the edifice itself.

The cathedral of Orvieto will illustrate these remarks. Its design is very simple. It consists of a parallelogram, from which three chapels of equal size project, one at the east end, and one at the north and south. The windows are small and narrow, the columns round, and the roof displays none of that intricate groining we find in English churches. The beauty of the interior depends on surface decoration, on marble statues, woodwork and fresco-paintings. Outside, there is the same simplicity of design, the same elaborated local ornament. The sides of the cathedral are austere, their narrow windows cutting horizontal lines of black and white marble. But the façade is a triumph of decorative art. It is strictly what Fergusson has styled a "frontispiece;" for it bears no relation whatever to the construction of the building. Its three gables rise high above the aisles. Its pinnacles and parapets and turrets are stuck on to look agreeable. It is a screen such as might be completed or left unfinished at will by the architect. Finished as it is, the façade of Orvieto is a wilderness of beauties. Its pure white marble has been mellowed by

time to a rich golden hue, in which are set mosaics shining like gems or pictures of enamel. A statue stands on every pinnacle; each pillar has a different design; round some of them are woven wreaths of vine and ivy; acanthus leaves curl over the capitals, making nests for singing-birds or cupids; the doorways are a labyrinth of intricate designs, in which the utmost elegance of form is made more beautiful by incrusterations of precious agates and Alexandrine glass-work. On every square inch of this wonderful façade have been lavished invention, skill, and priceless splendour of materials. But its chief interest centres in the sculptures executed by Giovanni and Andrea, sons and pupils of the great Nicola Pisano. The names of these three men mark an era in the history of art. They first rescued Italian sculpture from the grotesqueness of the Lombard, and the wooden monotony of the Byzantine styles. Sculpture takes the lead of all the arts. And Nicola Pisano, before Cimabue, before Duccio, even before Dante, opened the gates of beauty, which for a thousand years had been shut up and overgrown with hideous weeds. As Dante invoked the influence of Virgil when he began to write his mediæval poem, and made a heathen bard his hierophant in Christian mysteries, just so did Nicola Pisano draw inspiration from a Greek sarcophagus, which had been cast upon the shore at Pisa.

He studied the bas-relief of Phœdra and Hippolytus, which may still be seen upon the tomb of Countess Beatrice, in the Campo Santo, and so learned by heart the beauty of its lines, and the dignity expressed in its figures, that in all his subsequent works we trace the elevated tranquillity of Greek sculpture. This imitation never degenerated into servile copying; nor, on the other hand, did Nicola attain the perfect grace of an Athenian artist. He remained a truly mediæval carver, animated with Christian, instead of Pagan spirit, but caring for the loveliness of form which art in the dark ages failed to realize.

Whether it was Nicola or his sons who designed the bas-reliefs at Orvieto is of little consequence. Vasari ascribes them to the father; but we know that he completed his pulpit at Pisa in 1230, and his death is supposed to have taken place fifteen years before the foundation of the cathedral. At any rate, they are imbued with his genius, and bear the strongest affinity to his sculptures at Pisa, Sienna, and Bologna.

To estimate their influence upon the arts of sculpture and painting in Italy would be almost impossible. Duccio and Giotto studied here; Ghiberti closely followed them. Signorelli and Raphael made drawings from their compositions. And the spirit which pervades these sculptures may be traced in all succeeding works of art. It is not classic; it is modern, though embodied in a form of beauty modelled on the Greek.

The bas-reliefs are carved on four marble tablets placed beside the porches of the church, and corresponding in size and shape with the chief doorways. They represent the course of Biblical history beginning with the creation of the world, and ending with the last judgment. If it were possible here to compare them in detail with the similar designs of

Ghiberti, Michel Angelo, and Raphael, it might be shown that they originated modes of treating sacred subjects from which those mighty masters never deviated, though each stamped upon them his peculiar genius, making them more perfect as time added to the power of art. It would also be not without interest to show that in their primitive conceptions of the earliest events in history the works of the Pisan artists closely resemble some sculptures executed on the walls of the chapter-house at Salisbury at the end of the thirteenth century. We might have noticed how all the grotesque elements which appear in Nicola Pisano, and which may still be traced in Ghiberti, are entirely lost in Michel Angelo, how the supernatural is humanized, how the symbolical receives an actual expression, and how intellectual types are substituted for mere local and individual representations. For instance, the Pisani represent the Creator as a young man, standing on the earth, with a benign and dignified expression, and attended by two ministering angels. He is the Christ of the Creed, "by whom all things were made." In Ghiberti we find an older man, sometimes appearing in a whirlwind of clouds and attendant spirits, sometimes walking on the earth, but still far different in conception from the Creative Father of Michel Angelo. He is rather the Platonic Demiurgus than the Mosaic God. By every line and feature of his face and flowing hair, by each movement of his limbs, whether he ride on clouds between the waters and the firmament, or stand alone creating by a glance and by a motion of his hand Eve, the full-formed and conscious woman, he is proclaimed the Maker who from all eternity has held the thought of the material universe within his mind. Raphael does not depart from this conception. The vast abstraction of Michel Angelo ruled his intellect, and received from his genius a form of even greater grace. A similar growth from the germinal designs of the Pisani may be traced in many groups.

But we must not linger at the gate. Let us enter the cathedral and see some of the wonders it contains. Statues of gigantic size adorn the nave. Of these the most beautiful are the work of Ippolito Scalza, an artist whom Orvieto claims with pride as one of her own sons. The long line of saints and apostles whom they represent conduct us to the high altar surrounded by its shadowy frescoes, and gleaming with the work of carvers in marble and bronze and precious metals. But our steps are drawn toward the chapel of the south transept, where now a golden light from the autumnal sunset falls across a crowd of worshippers. From far and near the poor people are gathered. Most of them are women. They kneel upon the pavement and the benches, sunburned faces from the vineyards and the canebrakes of the valley. The old look prematurely aged and withered—their wrinkled cheeks bound up in scarlet and orange-coloured kerchiefs, their skinny fingers fumbling on the rosary, and their mute lips moving in prayer. The younger women have great lustrous eyes and large limbs used to labour. Some of them carry babies trussed up in tight swaddling-clothes. One kneels beside a dark-browed

shepherd, on whose shoulder falls his shaggy hair ; and little children play about, half-hushed, half-heedless of the place, among old men whose life has dwindled down into a ceaseless round of prayers. We wonder why this chapel, alone in the empty cathedral, is so crowded with worshippers. They surely are not turned towards that splendid Pietà of Scalza—a work in which the marble seems to live a cold, dead, shivering life. They do not heed Angelico's and Signorelli's frescoes on the roof and walls. The interchange of light and gloom upon the stalls and carved work of the canopies can scarcely rivet so intense a gaze. All eyes seem fixed upon a curtain of red silk above the altar. Votive pictures, and glass-cases full of silver hearts, wax-babies, hands and limbs of every kind, are hung around it. A bell rings. A jingling organ plays a little melody in triple time, and from the sacristy comes forth the priest. With much reverence and with a show of preparation, he and the acolytes around him mount the altar-steps, and pull a string which draws the curtain. Behind the curtain we behold Madonna and her child—a faint, old, ugly picture, blackened with the smoke and incense of five hundred years, a wonder-working image, cased in gold, and guarded from the common air by glass and draperies. Jewelled crowns are stuck upon the heads of the mother and the infant. In the efficacy of Madonna di San Brizio to ward off agues, to deliver from the pangs of childbirth or the fury of the storm, to keep the lover's troth, and make the husband faithful to his home, those pious women of the marshes and the mountains put a simple trust.

While the priest sings, and the people pray to the dance-music of the organ, let us take a quiet seat unseen, and picture to our minds how the chapel looked when Angelico and Signorelli stood before its plastered walls, and thought the thoughts with which they covered them. Four centuries have gone by since those walls were white and even to their brushes ; and now you scarce can see the golden aureoles of saints, the vast wings of the angels, and the flowing robes of prophets through the gloom. Angelico came first, in monk's dress, kneeling before he climbed the scaffold to paint the angry Judge, the Virgin crowned, the white-robed army of the Martyrs, and the glorious company of the Apostles. These he placed upon the roof, expectant of the judgment. Then he passed away, and Luca Signorelli, the rich man who "lived splendidly and loved to dress himself in noble clothes," the liberal and courteous gentleman, took his place upon the scaffold. For all the worldliness of his attire and the delicacy of his living, his brain teemed with stern and terrible thoughts. He searched the secrets of sin and of the grave, of destruction and of resurrection, of heaven and hell. All these he has painted on the walls beneath the saints of Fra Angelico. First come the troubles of the last days, the preaching of Antichrist, and the confusion of the wicked. In the next compartment, we see the Resurrection from the tomb, and side by side with that is painted Hell. Paradise occupies another portion of the chapel.

Look at the "Fulminati"—so the group of wicked men are called

whose death precedes the judgment. Huge naked angels, sailing upon van-like wings, breathe columns of red flame upon a crowd of wicked men and women. In vain they fly from the descending fire. It pursues and sells them to the earth. As they fly, their eyes are turned toward the dreadful faces in the air. Some hurry through a portico, huddled together, falling men, and women clasping to their arms dead babies scorched with flame. One old man stares straight forward, doggedly awaiting death. One woman scowls defiance as she dies. A youth has twisted both hands in his hair, and presses them against his ears to drown the screams and groans, and roaring thunder. They trample upon prostrate forms already stiff. Every shape and attitude of sudden terror and despairing guilt is here. Next comes the Resurrection. Two angels of the judgment—gigantic figures, with the plumeless wings that Signorelli loves—are seen upon the clouds. They blow trumpets with all their might ; so that each naked muscle seems strained to make the blast, which bellows through the air, and shakes the sepulchres beneath the earth. Thence rise the dead. All are naked, and a few are seen like skeletons. With painful effort they struggle from the soil that clasps them round, as if obeying an irresistible command. Some have their heads alone above the ground. Others wrench their limbs from the clinging earth ; and as each man rises it closes under him. One would think that they were being born again from solid clay and growing into form with labour. The fully risen spirits stand and walk about, all occupied with the expectation of the judgment ; but those that are in the act of rising have no thought but for the strange and toilsome process of this second birth. Signorelli here, as elsewhere, proves himself one of the greatest painters by the simple means with which he produces the most marvellous effects. His composition sways our souls with all the passion of the terrible scenes that he depicts. Yet what does it contain ? Two stern angels on the clouds, a blank grey plain, and a multitude of naked men and women. In the next compartment Hell is painted. This is a complicated picture, consisting of a mass of human beings entangled with torturing fiends. Above hover demons, bearing damned spirits, and three angels see that justice takes its course. Signorelli here degenerates into no mediæval ugliness and mere barbarity of form. His fiends are not the bestial creatures of Piasno's bas-reliefs, but models of those monsters which Dupper has engraved from Michel Angelo's "Last Judgment"—lean naked men, in whose hollow eyes glow the fires of hate and despair, whose nails have grown to claws, and from whose ears have started horns. They sail upon bats' wings ; and only by their livid hue, which changes from yellow to the ghastliest green, and by the cruelty of their remorseless eyes, can you know them from the souls they torture. In Hell ugliness and power of mischief come with length of years. Continual growth in crime distorts the form which once was human ; and the interchange of everlasting hatred degrades the tormentor and his victim to the same demoniac ferocity. To this design the science of foreshortening, and the profound knowledge of the human form in every

posture, give its chief interest. Paradise is not less wonderful. Signorelli has contrived to throw variety and grace into the somewhat monotonous groups which this subject requires. Above are choirs of angels, not like Fra Angelico's, but tall male creatures clothed in voluminous drapery, with grave features and still solemn eyes. Some are dancing, some are singing to the lute, and one, the most gracious of them all, bends down to aid a suppliant soul. The men beneath, who listen in a state of bliss, are all undraped. Signorelli, in this difficult composition, remains temperate, serene, and simple; a Miltonic harmony pervades the movement of his angelic choirs. Their beauty is the product of their strength and virtue. No floral ornaments or cherubs, or soft clouds are found in his Paradise. Yet it is fair and full of grace. Michel Angelo could not have painted such celestial bliss, and Luca seems to have anticipated Raphael.

After viewing these frescoes, we muse and ask ourselves why Signorelli's fame is so inadequate to his deserts? Partly, no doubt, because he painted in obscure Italian towns, and left few easel-pictures. The English public galleries contain no sample of his power except a single drawing in black chalk. Besides, the artists of the sixteenth century eclipsed all their predecessors, and the name of Signorelli has been swallowed up in that of Michel Angelo. Vasari said that "esso Michel Angelo imitò l'andar di Luca, come può vedere ognuno." Nor is it hard to see that what the one began at Orvieto the other completed in the Vatican. These great men had truly kindred spirits. Both struggled to express their intellectual conceptions in the simplest and most abstract forms. The works of both are distinguished by contempt for adventitious ornaments and for the grace of colour. Both chose to work in fresco, and selected subjects of the gravest and most elevated character. The study of anatomy, and the correct drawing of the naked body, which Luca introduced, were carried to perfection by Michel Angelo. Sublimity of thought and self-restraint pervade their compositions. He who would understand Buonarotti, must study Signorelli. The latter, it is true, had a quicker sense of beauty. He cared for youthful faces and for graceful movements of the limbs. We feel that painting was his art, and not, as in the case of Michel Angelo, that the mallet and the chisel were more familiar to his hand than the brush. Nor did his manner suffer from too close a study of the antique. He painted the life he saw around him, and clothed his men and women in the dress of Italy, and not in antique draperies.

Such reflections, and many more, pass through our mind as we sit and ponder in the chapel which the daylight has deserted. The country people are still on their knees, still careless of the frescoed forms around them, still praying to Madonna of the Miracles. The service is well nigh done. The benediction has been given, the organist strikes up his air of Verdi, and the congregation shuffles off, leaving the dimly-lighted chapel for the vast sonorous dusky nave. How strange it is to hear that faint strain of a feeble opera sounding where, a short while since, the trumpet-blare of Signorelli's angels seemed to thrill our ears!

Tid's Old Red Rag of a Shawl.



Y poor mother always said, if there was a thing in the world that you might keep seven years, and find a use for at last, it was a red shawl—a shawl that had been a respectable shawl in its day. While two threads hang together, it will keep you warm; while a shade of the glorious scarlet remains, it will make you stylish." And Tid threw round her shoulders, and strained her neck to see to her heels, her old red rag of a shawl, come originally from a hand-loom of Hindustan—thin at some places, crimson not scarlet at others, with the silk fringe like eyelashes rapidly moulting away.

"Come along, do, Miss Farren, have we done with your lecture, and go with the play," urged an impatient voice from behind a clothes-screen.

"Dear, dear, yes," chimed in another, issuing from a cupboard; we're not in class now, and we have not mastered the first part. My unk-hair's coming down, I feel sure, and I'm a man, you know, with cork moustaches. Did I not tell you, Miss Farren, I'm to act it to all my cousins, and Frank in the Lancers, by Twelfth Night?"

If you want to see the maddest, merriest, giddiest, jolliest party in the world, you may seek it in a company of school-girls, careering in the subdued light and general emptiness of a range of school-rooms, in the evenings of the week before Christmas. If you want to pick out the maddest, merriest, giddiest, jolliest girl, you may put your hand on the junior governess, for there you have the healthy forces of combination and reaction; there you have the wild spirits of the young animal in alliance with the worker's luxurious enjoyment of rest. The man or woman who describes the junior governess, even in hard lines, as habitually moody and mournful, has never studied the genus. Time may tell, work may tell, but while all the world is young, the junior governess is young and young with all her heart.

Matilda, Tilda, Tid Farren was preparing acted proverbs, charades,

tableaux vivants, with the pupils a few years older than herself, at the Miss Hibberds', Lavender Lane, Richmond, for the coming holidays. Tid was indispensable, and if anything, her shawl was still more indispensable. They went on the boards, Tid and her shawl, side by side, in capability and popularity. Their powers of the dramatic and the comical were far beyond rivalry, and the themes of universal admiration. Nothing could be done without them. What Tom Thumb geraniums are in a garden, Tid and her shawl were on the school-room stage : they were the brilliant, salient points in the greenness, pinkness, flatness, cloy sugariness and general milk-and-wateriness of the rest. Tid and her shawl had already been "on" in *Red Riding Hood* foreshortened, in *Abd-el-Kader* with a superb sash, in *Lady Macbeth* with a gorgeous turban ; and they made a final and crowning *coup*, and drew down such rounds of applause that the Miss Hibberds rung their bell and stopped the performance, in the smartest, nattiest little *Duke of Wellington*, in full field-marshall's uniform.

CHAPTER I.

THE MISS HIBBERDS IN COUNCIL, OPIN AND CLOSE.

The Miss Hibberds were holding a court-martial, attended by all the officers in their service, in the dining-room of their school, Lavender Lane, Richmond.

The Miss Hibberds were of a certain age. Miss Hibberd was tall, had a small fine head, like a greyhound's, which set off her velvet head-dress with lace lappets. She wore hoop-rings on china hands, cambric cuffs on spare wrists, an arrow neck-ribbon, like a dog's collar, fastening a delicate little brooch beneath the skinny bag under the pointed chin, and always looked as if she put herself fully dressed into a safe band-box at night, and took herself out as fresh as paint in the morning.

Miss Charlotte Hibberd was short and stout, with a solid neck, a big head, and much strong grizzled hair, so as to render it difficult for her, in the very same costume as Miss Hibberd, to make the most distant approach to elegance.

Miss Blount, the senior English governess, had turned the old maid's corner of thirty, clothed herself in a lavender woollen gown, with a *ruche* of the same material round the neck, and without any other adornment, in the heat of summer. Her complexion was too muddled to suffer from the wear and tear of life; but the leonine cast of her mouth was deeply dented by high spirit, strong sense, a few crotchetts on the social science movement, and considerable experience of grim care.

Mdlle. De la Rue was twenty-eight, and dressed elaborately. She had ringlets, a gilt comb, a knot of ribbon, a nosegay, a general rustle of silk and aroma of perfume. Her yellow face was keen in countenance and expression, even when it languished, in accompaniment to words of mock

heroism and stage sentiment, quotations from French classics, from *Les Horaces*, *Athalie*, and the *Ruy Blas*.

Fräulein Kester was about the same age as her French sister, put up the broad chin of a broad face in a white worked cravat, and wore a net drawn almost to her invisible eyebrows over her sandy hair, finished by a row of little tassels like little bells all round her head, and a pair of large tassels with loops of cord-like bell-pulls above her left ear. Fräulein Kester was a specimen of good living and phlegmatic philosophy.

Miss Farren, the junior English governess, at eighteen was put, with her own consent, into a lavender gown, in imitation of Miss Blount; but the Quaker colour would not quench blushes, erase dimples, nor dim eyes—only mortification and vexation did that. Miss Farren possessed a round-browed, soft-cheeked, cleft-chinned face; but at this moment she was not acting charades—it was tear-stained, out of the last remnant of pure complexion, with the accompanying nice brown hair and the nice collar and sleeves like the feathers of the most ruffled little bird in the world.

The court-martial sat on a culprit, and if mercy were not found in the breasts of the members there was little in the court-room to call forth the tender emotions. The dining-room at No. 2, Lavender Lane was not a spacious room, whose rich, warm mahogany was redolent of the lingering fumes of aldermanic feasts, and whose sideboard made a brave display of plate and crystal; neither was it a snug family-room, where papa's pet was cockered up in a high chair at his elbow for the dessert at least, and clamoured vociferously after ruddy grapes and russet apples. It was the barest, dullest room in Lavender Lane, where the sight of maps and dictionaries, scratches in pencil-drawing, or splashes in sepia, would have been a relief, as the girls said. It was like an hospital hall, a prison board, supposing prisoners ate in company. Long table, long benches, no rests for growing spines, urgent necessity for slim ankles being crooked round each other, till slippers, balanced on toe-tips, dropped and betrayed the unlady-like practice; faint memories of milk-soup, mince, rice-pudding. Though called the dining-room, all the meals at No. 2, Lavender Lane, with a preponderance of weak tea and untoasted bread in the victuals, took place there—Miss Hibberd at the head of the table, Miss Charlotte at the foot, Miss Blount with her eye on the big girls, Miss Farren dodging the small fry, Mdlle. De la Rue turning up her eyes at the ragout, Fraulein Kester aiming at a second spoonful of the salad: not a shred of conversation, unless when Miss Hibberd addressed a sentence in a company voice to Miss Charlotte, or when one of two incidents happened. First incident: Miss Anna Maria or Miss Lucy Jane caught with her knife in her mouth threatening suicide, or her spoon grasped close to the spoon's mouth by her whole four fingers and thumb in imminent danger of menseing her frock; or when a shrill little voice called out with tears, its owner could not eat fat, or crust, or Jamaica pepper, and its owner was assured, with solemn dogmatism, good little girls—lady-like little girls—could eat anything. (N.B.—Virtue and gentility are so fast

wedded in girls'-schools that it is a wonder that women ever succeed in dissevering them.) Second incident: when Miss Mainwaring was detected crumpling down her bread in process of coming to want, or Miss Finch eating mustard, and rendering herself inadmissible at Almack's when Almack's existed, and was summarily pounced upon and brought to justice. Miss Hibberd herself gave a sigh of relief when school meals were ended, and Miss Farren could have gone out into the laurel walk—there is always a laurel walk at a school—and chirped like a linnet.

Miss Farren was not chirping now—she was crying bitterly, ruffling her brown hair as crying ruffles hair when little hands press it from the brow, and clasp themselves tightly over the shrinking face. Miss Farren was arraigned before the authorities, accused of misdemeanor in the presence of her fellows, unmistakably found guilty, and only awaiting her sentence. She was not attempting to prevaricate or defend herself, but collapsing with shame and distress, and willing to creep into a mouse's hole. No marvel that Miss Farren was overcome to listen to the big words hurled at the girl's devoted head. "Evil example," "trust abused," "ingratitude," "giddiness," "unworthy yielding to an unworthy young man's advances." At the last expression Miss Farren looked up and spoke up a little.

"No, please, Miss Hibberd, don't say so; Mr. Bishop did not mean to do me harm—he only meant to be kind." And there Tid broke down worse than ever.

"You are a fine judge, Miss Farren," said Miss Hibberd, with irony. "Very dignified, delicate-minded, brotherly kindness in Mr. Bishop to write notes to Miss Farren, and hand them to her along with the poor dear deceived girls' exercises—notes making appointments for half-holidays; and one of the notes was found and whispered about, so that the affair cannot be hushed up even if Miss Charlotte and myself would consent to such a breach of truth. Miss Farren to receive the notes and keep the appointments, and wear particular dresses for the occasions"—bringing herself up short, summing up the main offences, and leaving herself out of breath—"Oh! Miss Farren!"

"Oh! Miss Farren!" echoed Miss Charlotte, in so deep a voice from her bulk as to have something sepulchral in its tones.

"Ah, ciel!" cried Mdlle. De la Rue, clasping her bony hands, thinking at the same time: "Quelle nottise! If that cold, shy monsieur had had taste for the tourture, if he had made eyes to me, ma foi! he should have been mon proix chevalier all the seasons, without these vieilles demoiselles, or any one else, being the wiser."

"So, so!" Fraulein Kester testified in condemnation, raising her net by an elevation of her light eyebrows, and declining it again, all the tassels shaking simultaneously like so many dumbbells, while she considered: "Es bedeute nichts die Briefe, die zusammenkommen, when they might have loved as philosophers, and not have risked the Butterbrod!"

Miss Blount stated plainly: "I am surprised that you could be so foolish, Miss Farren, though you are a girl of eighteen."

"He only wrote to me thrice," pleaded the girl, at bay; "and once was about Miss Martin's bad spelling in her dictation. I wore no particular dress, but my red shawl, that he might see me coming. He only took me to Hampton Court, and we went and came by the 'bus early. The chestnuts were in flower at Bushy, and I saw the real picture whose copy I was copying; and he thought I was looking ill, and a change would do me good." And here was a most deplorable departure from the model of the Iron Duke.

"Enough, Miss Farren!" Miss Hibberd ended the sitting austerely. "Thrice or three hundred times, what does it matter? To Hampton Court! where the cook and the housemaid's young men, if they are so left to themselves as to have these unnecessary appendages, wish to take them of a Sunday! but they know it is as much as their places are worth to consent. Poor ignorant women! they have some sense of propriety and obedience. I wonder it was not Hampton Court on a Sunday, Miss Farren! I need not say you must both give up your situations; and I cannot tell you whether I am glad or sorry that it is the eve of the Midsummer holidays, and you may be spared disgrace, or that society will lose a warning. But I should like to know how could the upper classes trust Miss Charlotte and me with the rearing and training of young ladies, if they knew that such iniquitous contempt of duty occurred actually within the shelter of our walls? You'll keep your room, Miss Farren; you are not fit to be seen, and you will not be guilty of any further folly in my house. Miss Blount, Mdlle., and Fräulein, I shall feel much obliged by your overlooking the young ladies' packing. It is fortunate for the poor innocent young things that they are too much occupied with going home, to discover and be corrupted by this disgraceful occurrence. Miss Charlotte, you will be so good as to accompany me to our sitting-room."

Miss Hibberd sailed out, Miss Charlotte stumped out, Mademoiselle hrugged her shoulders with that incomparable French shrug, Fräulein repeated her "So, so!" with an entirely different note of meaning. Miss Farren believed she was ruined, and, what was a great deal harder to bear, had ruined young Mr. Bishop, the English and classical master, and wished she could make it up to him and run away for ever. Miss Blount set off gruffly to do as she was bid, throwing over her shoulder—

"If you don't dry your eyes, Miss Farren, you'll have one of your sties. You know you are not enough of a woman to have left off sties."

Miss Hibberd and Miss Charlotte were in their own room, not in the drawing-room, with its narrow mirrors and attenuated alabaster vases with wax-flowers, where the girls occasionally appeared in low-necked white dresses, and made believe they were attending an evening party, and playing their pieces and singing their duets in public, without gentlemen or supper, and the wild girls compared the performance to eating lamb without mint-sauce or pickled walnuts. The Miss Hibberds' private parlour was a little hole, the floor covered with a faded old carpet, where

neither rickety work-table nor hideous silhouettes could have been kept for effect. Miss Hibberd dropped into the nearest chair and put her elbows on the table, Miss Charlotte seated herself inconveniently on a high ancient music-stool and set it twirling round, balancing herself on one exposed foot, as if that foot were not flat to begin with, and did not have its remaining symmetry destroyed by bunions.

"Clandestine correspondence! the omnibus! Hampton! very heedless and low! I'm disgusted. At the same time I'm as sorry as can be, Lot."

"I'm the same, Kitty; and what is to become of the creature Tid?"

What would you have? The Miss Hibberds were not ogres—they were schoolmistresses. They could put off their armour of politeness and savageness, and sit in their easy buff coats of familiarity and charity, and enjoy their plum-cake and green tea, their roast pheasant and glass of Madeira, as well and a good deal better than their neighbours. The very girls, except the bad ones, who cheat and hate schoolmistresses, saw through them. They had a language and bearing of the school, as there is a language and bearing of the law, the camp, the church; but everybody took it at what it was worth, unless, indeed, an unlucky Tid Farren, in matters of conscience. Tid had taken all the head prizes at Miss Hibberd's, and been quite a crack hand and show-card from the time she came a little orphan pupil, educated at half price, up through the stages of pupil-teacher and junior governess, and was the most spirited actress of charades as we have seen, but was the most easily put down, the most confiding scrupulous little goose. Yet Tid had come to grief, doubtless because, "frailty, thy name is woman."

"Who would have thought it of Tid!" groaned Miss Charlotte. "But there was always a silliness about that child, though the doctor declared her verses were worthy of a Cantab. She would let herself be cheated out of house and hold in calico, and twilled and plain, and needles, blunts-and square-eyes. The more shame to Mr. Bishop!"

"Not at all," contradicted Miss Hibberd, getting vicious. "Mr. Bishop would not have looked twice at Tid if she had not looked at him," Miss Hibberd assured her confounded sister. "It is my principle, Lot, that any well-educated girl can keep the most presumptuous young man in the kingdom at a distance, if she chooses. Bishop indeed! a soft mooning fellow, who cannot manage the girls without help."

Observe the pride or the magnanimity of the sexes. A man would have said it was Bishop's blame, the blockhead ought to have thought what he was about before he led astray the girl, and got her into a row; while Miss Hibberd maintained it was the girl who led astray the fellow. And such contradictory judgments are in force all the world over.

"I will speak to Mr. Bishop when he comes for his fees, and have nothing more to do with him," ended Miss Hibberd.

"Miss Blount is to set up a school over against the Park—her aunt's old school, you know, dear—in August," suggested Miss Charlotte, hesitatingly. "Might not she try Mr. Bishop? He has been very pains-

taking, and he is a scholar and university man, only he has not got too much to do. I see that, not only by his not being in a hurry, but by his hat being brushed to the last hair of the nap; and I think sometimes he turns down his wristbands to hide his gloves—he could not mend them himself, I suppose: I could find it in my heart to offer, only it would not be proper. Dear me! I don't mean because he is a gentleman, Kitty—when he might be my son, and none knowing my age better than yourself, only you look a great deal younger—but because of our position. There is no such thing yet as iron gloves—I don't mean the old gauntlets, of course," explained Miss Charlotte; "but like the collars and bands one reads of in the papers. Might not Miss Blount do something for Tid also, when they have agreed so well together? Mademoiselle and Fräulein have both got engagements in the country, and so, for all you said, Kitty, this vexatious business might be hushed up. I am sure Mr. Bishop and Tid would never be so foolish and wrong again. It is dreadful to think of turning off two inexperienced, unprotected young persons; it must feel so bad when we come to say our prayers," entreated Miss Charlotte, piteously.

"A work of necessity"—Miss Hibberd laid down the law relentlessly. "Miss Blount told me she was to keep on the former teachers, and quite right too. Can't you comprehend, Lot," Miss Hibberd continued drily, "Miss Blount, who is a remarkably sensible woman, keep her off air and water, would be an idiot to take the two of them? There would be the English master kissing the governess behind the school-room doors next! Monstrous!"

"What will become of Tid if she can't procure another situation?" mused Miss Charlotte, in the deepest depression. "Situations ain't as plentiful as blackberries, and you will be obliged to tell the reason you dismissed her when people come to seek a recommendation."

"Why, that is her business!" exclaimed Miss Hibberd, losing patience. "And I'll tell you what, Lot—you are not to be so intolerable as to go into low spirits about this affair, as you did when that fool Miss Ludlow refused to put out the girls' lights, and called it menial. I have quite enough on my hands without that. I will speak to Mr. Bishop, on the ground that he did not think fit to speak to me before taking notice of one of our teachers. I will do no more than point out to the mistaken young man his dishonourable, ungentlemanlike behaviour."

CHAPTER II.

MR. BISHOP ON DUTY, AND UNDER CROSS-EXAMINATION.

Mr. BISHOP was the most modest of men: he blushed after he knocked at a door; he was ready to drop down when he presented his card and stated his business. There was no want of capacity in his broad, fair forehead, serene when it was not pink with agitation; but there was great want of assurance. How so modest a man and Tid, likewise a sensitive girl,

found courage to pick up a particular acquaintance and advance to what Miss Hibberd would have called philandering, was one of the puzzles which occur in society every day. Mr. Bishop, besides his constitutional shyness, laboured under the constraint of a sense of wrong-doing, with its call for concealment,—not in the affair with Tid. Mr. Bishop was so infatuated he saw no culpability there: he felt in the seventh heaven, he glorified himself on his intercourse with Tid; but Mr. Bishop had a vice—not dogs or horses—to which he was addicted: he smoked; he smoked pretty considerably. A reckless, dissipated young man he was, more particular about the quality of his Havannahs and Manillas than the texture of his kids; and he could not resist the desire or deny himself its gratification. His long trudges on foot, his jolting rides in 'busses, his irregular meals—he had neither mother nor sister to live with him—his wearing, worrying profession, his solitary life might be slight excuses. Notwithstanding, to enter No. 2, Lavender Lane, or any other virgin's bower, with an odour of stale tobacco, even in the refined guise of the best cheroots, impregnating and oozing from his person, was a privilege, Mr. Bishop was sufficiently open to reason to recognize, could only be accorded to Fraulein Kester's huge, tranquil countryman, Herr Schneider, who never doubted that everybody, Frau and Fraulein, approved of his meerschaum and its enchantment—a privilege absolutely refused to a young English and classical master, though it was his only solace, and though he had accustomed himself to smoke half nights when he sported his oak in his college. Mr. Bishop was constantly sniffing his own air guiltily, unfurling his frayed-out handkerchief with its overdone, atrocious odour of patchouli, drawing his fingers through his soft lank hair. In his agonizing apprehensions of accusation and remonstrance from teachers like the Miss Hibberds and the female heads of families, Mr. Bishop ran up a serious score at a hair-dresser's for aromatic pomades and perfumes, and he bought and paid for as many bouquets, like a dandy on the steps of his club, as he spent on rolls, every morning from March to November; he had such slavish dependence on a bunch of violets, or a cluster of roses, a sprig of mignonette or heliotrope, to refresh his seedy young person, that he could not venture abroad to play his part for the day without a flower in his button. In mid-winter he trusted a hard frost broke scent to human as to canine noses. Mr. Bishop was the youngest unmarried master at No. 2, Lavender Lane. He stood five feet eight in his boots: he had a tolerable nose, and almond-shaped grey eyes; he was weak in whisker, but was not in consequence so far left to himself as to set up a straggling beard: he was strong in forehead even when it was pink, and there was a charm in the reverential distance he kept from the girls—the kind of chivalry with which he invested them, though, being girls, they were not capable of appreciating the treatment—they were more susceptible to the vagrant aroma of tobacco, which supplied the young man to them with the zest that the thorn gives the rose. Bishop was a great favourite with the girls; many of them doted on him, styled him in conf-

dence, "Dear Bishop," "sweet Bishop," "that duck Bishop"—surreptitiously hoarded the pencils he dropped, the bits of paper he had occasion to write upon, particularly the ends of the cigars he lost, dreamt of him, plaited their hair at him, made dreadful allusions to him in their verses, which would have thrown Bishop into fits and caused him to bolt in shame and dismay, had he understood them, as he corrected the halting lines. On the other hand, they all bullied him, tormented him, and barefacedly cheated him.

This day Bishop was merely in class to give them their places and return them their papers; but even to-day Miss Bewcastle popped in with her bonnet on her head, giggling and causing the rest to giggle at the liberty.

"Please, madam, do me the favour to remove that bonnet, I cannot see the face. I shall make a mistake," implored Mr. Bishop. Being the man he was, it is needless to say Bishop was near-sighted.

"Oh, please, Mr. Bishop," responded Miss Bewcastle, joyously lifting up her head, and glancing out from beneath her turned-back curls, "it won't come off. I tried it on to see how it would do to travel with; it has just come in from the milliner, and the string has run into a knot, and it won't come off—you can try it yourself if you like—unless I cut it, the new string, Mr. Bishop. I'm convinced I'll have to sit with it at dinner and tea before Miss Hibberd and Miss Charlotte, and sleep with it, which is of less consequence, as I leave at seven in the morning."

"Mr. Bishop, why have you put me fifth?" broke out a great girl, in a frenzy. "I would not mind it if I were not below that minx Rhoda Turner. What do you say? Sit here only one day and the Miss Hibberds and the rest see me? No, I won't, sir, I tell you plainly. I would not mind it if I were not below that cunning, spiteful dwarf Rhoda Turner, and I the head and shoulders taller; and Mr. Vallance says I am the best artist in the school now. I thought you had a favour for me, Mr. Bishop"—and the furious, overgrown child's breast began to heave, and the heart within to melt behind the muslin Garibaldi—"ever since"—sob—"I gave you"—sob, sob—"a lozenge for your cough——"

"Miss Yates, you were very kind, but I am a man of honour," protested Mr. Bishop. "You are all women of honour, young gentlewomen, for whom I have the most thorough respect and regard. You have all done well, at least I have made no complaint. If any one of you is the best artist in the school, I protest I am proud to hear it; but that excellence does not qualify you to sit highest in the English and rudimentary Latin class. Indeed, I think I would be content with one distinction if I were you, Miss Yates."

"But, Mr. Bishop"—and big rebellious Miss Yates drew a gusty sigh—"Rhoda Turner has a distinction too."

"And it is my due when you are allowed to gain one, and you do not know adverbs from adjectives, and wrote in your essay that Roger Bacon was Lord Chancellor of England," little Rhoda defied her.

Mr. Bishop was no more fit to control girls than he was to put babies in their cradles, or embroider pin-cushions. He could be firm with boys: the fact was, *they* called him a contradictory, obstinate pig; but, in his present development, he dealt with the girls in so gingerly a fashion, was so frightened for being hard or harsh to them, so much more affronted than they were at the idea of taking liberties with them, that it was necessary Tid should sit, finishing up school-work, with a womanly, home-like air, in the room with her class, positively to prevent the girls copying each other's exercises under Mr. Bishop's well-formed nose, or repeating their lessons to be said by heart off neatly-written slips of paper, neatly pinned inside their wide sleeves or under their fancy aprons. And evil came of that precaution in its turn.

Mr. Bishop passed on to his last interview for the season with Miss Hibberd. He had only to call himself back and correct himself for wrong names and numbers, for first cheating himself and then Miss Hibberd, and assure her, in penitent perturbation, that he had added up the whole correctly in his lodgings last night, and he could not tell, with all his mathematics, why the sums would come out wrong in her drawing-room next day.

Miss Charlotte entered, ducked to Mr. Bishop, and dropped down on a chair, with her whole drapery, crinoline and all, swathed round her in the most inexplicable manner.

Miss Hibberd shook out her dress, smoothed her gloved-hands with a significant frown at Miss Charlotte, and said, stiffly, "I have a few words more to say to you, Mr. Bishop. I am exceedingly sorry, I am shocked at the cause of it."

"It is the smoking at last," thought the young man. "I had out my match on Wednesday before I was beyond the shrubbery. I was thinking of Tid, and I might have been in the drawing-room, or in a first-class carriage, it would have been all the same." But he answered hypocritically, the perspiration starting at every pore: "I am very sorry, madam, I am at a loss——" and there stopped for the crisis.

"Mr. Bishop, I believe you have become acquainted, under our roof, with our governess, Miss Farren?"

"Madam, I have the honour," gasped Mr. Bishop, his former flush, in the unexpected shock, paling to a girl's—to Tid's paleness.

"The honour!" Miss Hibberd could not help repeating in a high key. "The honour which could be shown in writing notes—such notes in a ladies'-school, and in going in 'busses to Hampton, and—and other places on half-holidays."

"Madam, madam!"—stammered Mr. Bishop, more faintly, clasping his shabby hat to his heart.

"We had reason to expect more consideration. Having conducted ourselves with unblemished integrity all our lives, we were justified in imagining that a young lady and a gentleman would respect our roof, and the confidence we placed in them, and not indulge in the most reprehensible associations and appointments. We have been mistaken: tempta-

tions have been presented, deceit has been practised. Our young people—the numerous household of young ladies of the highest character—who have been living under our care and profiting by the instructions given under the direction of Miss Charlotte and myself, have been exposed to the most unsettling, the most demoralizing influences."

Miss Hibberd delivered her harangue with great stateliness. Miss Charlotte listened, much impressed.

"Miss Hibberd, I beg your pardon," burst out Mr. Bishop. "I had no conception you would regard any little approach I made to Tid, to Miss Farren, in so dark a light. I would have asked your permission—I mean about Hampton Court: I know now I ought not to have written the notes, but I was so accustomed to writing—no, to correcting things, imaginary letters along with her—that I could not resist the inclination—though I should have controlled myself—to have one of her own composition all to myself. But, about Hampton Court, I would have asked permission, only asking is such hard work to me, Miss Hibberd; and then you know—you know, you might have refused."

"I would have refused most undoubtedly, Mr. Bishop," Miss Hibberd assured him. "I would have been very much annoyed; but my faith in you would not have been destroyed. I might not have felt under the painful necessity of informing you that your services will not be required, under any circumstances, next session at Lavender Lane."

"Very well, Miss Hibberd," assented young Bishop, so quietly, that he might have had an engagement at the Duc d'Aumale's, or been free to dine at the Star and Garter, and moved towards the door.

The sudden manliness touched Miss Hibberd more than any apology or display of ignorance of the world, rashness, single-heartedness—Mr. Bishop looking so young all the time. "I have no fault to find with your teaching or conduct in other respects," conceded Miss Hibberd. "In spite of your imprudence, I will stretch a point and let you have a testimonial, if you wish it, Mr. Bishop."

"Thank you"—Mr. Bishop still expressed himself with unusual self-control and with a little bitterness. "I am a young strong fellow; I have had a good education, thanks to a poor father. I believe there is nothing against my character; but I cannot afford to dispense with the favour."

Miss Hibberd drew her desk towards her while Miss Charlotte blew her nose. Miss Hibberd paused, and said again, in her rage for being just, "I feel for any member of my sex; I would shield her from blame, except where fairness must be compromised. I think it is but fair to tell you that I do not believe you would have been so foolish if Miss Farren had not been equally, nay still more foolish—for a woman's discretion should never be off its guard, and ought to inform and confirm a man's. Miss Farren has forfeited my good opinion for perfect judgment and propriety. I am very much disappointed in Miss Farren; she cannot continue at Lavender Lane, and be Miss Blount's successor, as I intended."

"Miss Hibberd!"—Miss Hibberd started, Miss Charlotte stumbled to her feet; the voice was so resolute, so eager, so full of a true man's longing hope and gladness—"If you say that, it may be worth my while to offer to Miss Farren what I have not had the face to offer before. It may be worth a destitute young girl like Tid's while to accept me. I am young, strong, with the most available weapon, that of a good education. Bless you! I'm learned beside Tid, clever and bright as she is: I'm a thousand times better qualified to keep the wolf from the door than a tender young girl. I have my last quarter's salary, and I don't owe more than a trifle. I'll restrict myself to a cheroot a day, or I'll give them up altogether. If I don't get more teaching I can turn book-keeper, copying-clerk, reporter, prompter. I'm young and strong, and thank God, He has kept me honest. What should hinder me from marrying Tid, and working for her and with her? She'll help, if I am forced to let her. She is not useless, nervous, proud: she's an earnest, energetic, simple darling. I know she's simple, but I prefer the woman with heart and brain, courage and resource, to the helpless, haughty, suspicious woman, though the first has the guilelessness to be cheated. We'll both be cheated!" raved Mr. Bishop, like an inspired young madman, "and look grave for a moment, and then laugh and grow wiser. I durst not have taken Tid from the security and prosperity of a father's house; but she has told me she is a penniless orphan, and you have told me you can have nothing more to do with her. What is to hinder me from marrying Tid Farren, and finding room for her, and strength with her, and bliss in her, in my lodgings at Clapham? You cannot say I have not told you this time, Miss Hibberd."

"My dear Mr. Bishop," Miss Hibberd was remonstrating, literally, her handsome old face looking young again; Miss Charlotte was patting the modest, fervent young man on the back, as if he were her son; and Tid, in the background, was prepared to find the poorest marriage with him infinitely before going off in a carriage-and-four with a millionaire. . . .

Tid was married in a country church, not very far off, in Kent, where the Misses Hibberd were spending their holidays. You may be sure her wedding-gown was a very plain one, and as it threatened rain, she was thankful to have her old red shawl tucked round her as she ran from the porch to the cab. The Misses Hibberd were there without ostentation, and without putting down their names in the register, but in orthodox silks and white bonnets—that on Miss Charlotte's broad head falling obstinately back to the nape of her neck, and exposing her wild natural fronta. Miss Blount walked up the aisle in exact time for the ceremony, in her ordinary lavender woollen gown and mantle—come in the third class, and never was better situated in her life; a trifle of dust, but nothing to choke her, and the company of an intelligent market-woman and two day-labourers, who listened attentively to her reasons for opening all the windows, and were much struck when she described a canary bird, hung

within the closed curtains of a four-post bed, found dead in the morning. Miss Blount carried in her hand a present for Tid—not a card-case, or a fish knife and fork, or a toilette bottle; but a thermometer for testing the heat of her sitting-room at Clapham, and directions for ascertaining the mineral qualities of the water she drank there—warranting Tid that if she were careful to breathe fresh air and drink pure water, she need not mind much besides: she would thrive, and she might make Bishop thrive. “But no narcotics—mind, Tid, not a narcotic any more than alcohol, on pain of a gradual stupefaction of the brain. Break your husband’s pipe, Tid; fling away his cherished weed; never mind though he be as restless as a whirlwind and as cross as two straws. No narcotics, else you will have him dull, and grey, and sodden, and imbecile in no time.”

CHAPTER III.

TID AND HER HUSBAND TO THE RESCUE.

TID was the wife of Mr. Bishop, in the lodging at Clapham, and by the express favour of the Miss Hibberds, came and went with the train, and acted as day governess at No. 2, Lavender Lane. It was a dangerous precedent which the Miss Hibberds established, and they had a great many consultations before granting it; but grant it they did. Tid told Bishop she liked it. It would be different when she had a house of her own to manage, but now she preferred bustling about and “breaking herself by degrees of classes, tasks, and school-girls;” it was a remarkably fine autumn, and when it was wet she had her waterproof cloak and goloshes. Everybody knew her, and was kind to her, and she lunched with the Miss Hibberds at least twice a week—in confidence, she believed, every time the dear old things had anything particularly nice to themselves. The evenings were sufficient, as yet, for Tid’s shopping, her adventures in housekeeping, her enterprises on Bishop’s shirts and handkerchiefs, gloves and stockings, new wristbanding and collaring, and darning, and clearstarching and ironing. Bishop was at home then to run in and chatter to, to help through with his pupils’ themes, to ask reading from, if he wanted to be asked, and stroll out with and “have a smoke with,” as Bishop called it putting a force on language, and build castles in the air with, and have glimpses of harvest-homes, and searches for bats and beetles on earth, and constellations in the sky, like a pair of Cockneys, clever, slightly pedantic and scientific, attached to each other. In the process Tid was always taking care of Bishop, bringing him in to supper, getting him up to breakfast, inciting him to courage and constancy in his profession. Tid soon lost her childishness—not her child-likeness, that was indestructible—and learned to distinguish between aloe-leaves and the Chinese herb, and silk ribands or ribands three-fourths cotton. Bishop, on his part, grew more composed and more

indifferent to the smoking, as a representative man, representing Tid as well as himself, and as used to Tid's indulgence. By the time Bishop wreathed curls of smoke over a cradle, shouldered a baby, and was impelled to take the command of a nursery-maid and a perambulator, he would be as steady as a rock under so much ballast, and the next thing to defiant under so much immunity, until he rallied girls like a brother, and rebuked them like a father.

It was a fine autumn down at Richmond to those who did not consider there might be too much of a good thing. Miss Blount, who leaned to strong-minded teaching in galleries and museums, and above all, to great draughts of fresh air on Richmond Hill, Hounslow Heath, and Wimbledon Common, came often to tell Tid what Bishop's smoking would bring him to, and to beg her to join the feast on the heath, or the common, or the hill, where Miss Blount allowed the girls their fill of berries or cresses to their bread and milk; but no narcotics, under pain of her vengeance, not even tea or coffee. Miss Blount was constantly preaching that, unless they had thunder and rain soon, there would be influenza—that British version of cholera in the spring. But no one minded Miss Blount any more than the Government Commission or Common Council mind the Jeremiahs who forebode we shall have black or yellow death at home one of these days, if they won't look sharp and clean filthy Father Thames. It was a fine autumn, with huge walnuts and the tawny-leaved grapes bearing splendid purple clusters on open-air brick walls, when there rose a sough of people laid down with sore throat, an un-English sore throat, under which the strength sank almost without pain in a night, or held out days and weeks with the strange leather-like fungus, unbroken by all the doctors' efforts, until the death-rattle sounded and the patient was gone where there was no need of healing.

In one day both Miss Hibberd and Miss Charlotte were seized with the epidemic. Miss Hibberd acknowledged falling ill, and predicted the ailment. Miss Charlotte wandered about trying to obey orders and looking for more, with feverish distended eyes, till Miss Hibberd stopped in the middle of a speech, stared at her sister, said directly, "Miss Charlotte has got the sore throat also, look at it, doctor." And Miss Charlotte's throat was found the more fungus-grown of the two. Then the sisters faltered for a moment till it occurred to Miss Hibberd it might be better there should be no survivor; the two had so long done their work in company, there was some comfort in dying together. The school was the first thing to be thought of in their growing helplessness—the children, and other people's children, committed to them: of course they must be sent home immediately. There would be a difficulty in gathering the school together again, and they were not rich, Miss Hibberd reflected with a sigh; but sufficient for the day was the evil thereof: it was probable there would be no more need of collecting the girls so far as the Miss Hibberds were concerned. The greatest difficulty was about the children from India, and those whose residences were at a distance: and

the winter day shortening, and Miss Hibberd feeling more and more poorly, and Miss Charlotte forced to lie down already !

Miss Hibberd could not be too thankful that Tid was there, and Mr. Bishop coming presently, they would not mind seeing the girls to the railway station ; and Miss Blount called too, and came in for a second, though it was an infected house.

" My dear Miss Hibberd, I have no fear of infection, I never had, you know. I believe it is a delusion ; at least, it is nothing but bad air, and that is pretty general over the country. Read Florence Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing*, if you don't credit me. Let me take the girls. Where is the use of sending them home, spreading infection, if there is infection ? Catching their deaths of sudden panic, fatigue, and cold, a great deal more likely. I have been so particular about space and air at Park Terrace that I can accommodate double my number upon a pinch with open windows—open windows, Miss Hibberd."

" Miss Blount, you are a lady, you are a good woman, and a friend in need," said Miss Hibberd huskily through her poor throat. " But who is to teach all the girls ? You have thirty, twenty of mine would be fifty. Fifty girls without teaching and discipline, like fifty soldiers without fighting or drill, they would get into harm or fall ill at once."

" I will teach them if Miss Blount will permit me," said Mr. Bishop, stepping forward. " I will get up in the morning and take them before and after my filled-up hours : I can manage girls without help since I have been obliged to manage Tid."

Tid did not smile as he had expected, standing close to him, and stealing a cold shaking hand into his ; her round dimpled face was very pale, her dewy lips dry.

" Good heavens, Tid, you are not ill !" he cried, putting out his hand to pull her to the door, and betraying panic instantaneously.

" Not at all," said Tid, rousing herself ; " and I will stay with the Miss Hibberds."

" Out of the question, child," Miss Hibberd was fit to proclaim ; " you must go with your husband, and besides there can be no communication between my house and Miss Blount's."

" For myself, I should not mind as to communication," protested Miss Blount ; " but I am afraid if we are to have any peace we must yield a little to the popular prejudice."

" I cannot allow it, Tid," said Bishop in a loud voice, dying away as he ended and caught Tid's eye.

" Yes, you will allow me, Bishop," she said, resolutely. " Come and speak to me," and she took him aside.

" Are you tired of life, Tid—are you tired of me ? " he cried, distractedly. " You are not in a fit state to undertake the sacrifice, and it is not required."

" No, it is voluntary," she said. " Would it keep me safe from death to refuse to enter the dark valley when my friends pass through ? I tell you

I must go with them, Bishop, and if I have a double life I will have double care. Oh ! Bishop, Bishop, were they idle words spoken eighteen centuries ago, about loving father or mother, husband or wife, or child, more than Him, and not being worthy of Him ?"

" We have been so happy, Tid," groaned Bishop. Oh ! the mortal misery, the tender human misery of that groan.

" Now, Bishop, hear me. I am not going to wander, I am not light in the head, but I have been thinking of one of the girls' Scotch songs which the papas like better than the operas ; this is it—

She's gi'en me meat, she's gi'en me claes,
She's been my comfort a' my days,
I dare na leave my mammy.

The Miss Hibberds gave me meat and claes when I could hardly earn them, they helped us, or we could not have come together, or having come together, you, poor fellow, would have been harassed to death with care. Though we are in a Protestant country, we are not fond of married women in situations in England. So, Bishop, I dare not leave the poor, good Miss Hibberds after all they have done for me."

" But how can I be separated from you, Tid ? I cannot bear it."

" Yes, dear Bishop, I'll tell you how I will help you. Come night and morning to the end of Lavender Lane, where you will see the house and Miss Hibberd's window. I will hang out my red shawl, the shawl you used to know me by at a distance, you remember ? That will show you I am well. If you ever do not see the shawl, then you have my leave to come on and enter the house, and stay with me and take care of me, my dear, dear fellow. I know you would not mind giving up your classes, letting everything take its chance, and running any risks yourself; neither Miss Blount, nor the Miss Hibberds would want to separate man and wife in the circumstances. But I will not be smitten ; you heard what Miss Blount said about infection, and people like me are never smitten."

There was heroism in the poor girl's hysterical speech (she was as calm as a judge the moment her husband left her). There was heroism in Bishop's going with his heart clutched by terror and leaving Tid to do her duty in the jaws of death. It must have warmed the old hearts and nerved the old frames in the danger they were running. There were few things more touching than Tid watching by her old friends' sick beds, giving them their medicines and cordials, carrying inquiries and messages from the one to the other, reading to them, writing for them, solacing them in every way. She restored the courage of the frightened servants : the fat cook and the grenadiers of housemaids and laundry-maids, who had not a tittle of the moral endurance of small-sized Tid. The domestics had been nearly beside themselves, and they one and all declared that, though they would not have deserted their mistresses and left them to " them hospital nurses," they would have begun each one to feel a lump in her throat as big as an egg and as black as a plum, if it had not been for " that 'ere dear, clever, pretty young Mrs. Bishop," whom they had all

known "Miss Farren as was," and who stayed with them, and went so softly up and down stairs, and spoke so cheerily, and came out and took her meals as religiously, and sensibly, and thankfully as an old woman, bless her dear heart ! and she a young wife in a delicate situation, separated from her husband as doted on the ground she walked on, and confined to the dismallest sick-rooms in the world. If there was a thing more than another that went to the heart like a clasp-knife, as the fat cook, who loved a figure of speech, expressed it, it was to see young Mrs. Bishop hanging out that old red shawl of hers as a sign to her husband.

That old red shawl of Tid's which had figured gloriously in Christmas charades, which had been familiar to Bishop as a lover, how little she had dreamt it would serve as a flag of hope to Bishop when they were quite an old married couple ! She had imagined she might wrap her baby in it in default of something less venerable, and had said to herself her baby would be none the worse for being carried about in a shawl that had belonged to its grandmother ; but never that it should be a signal of life and health, and a fair day on the morrow, like the red in the summer sunset, to the baby's father. Tid would unfurl the shawl and stand for a few minutes at the half-open window, with the wind blowing her hair, straining her eyes, as if she could see Bishop yonder, beyond the acacias, where the lamps began to twinkle, and then she would clasp her hands, and whether she prayed for the Miss Hibberds, or herself, or Bishop, or her unborn baby—for women have strange fancies and gleams of second-sight—it was a sweet soul that prayed, and Heaven heard.

Poor Bishop's heart would be thumping like a steam-engine, so that he could not smoke a single puff after the day's hard routine, when he reached the end of Lavender Lane, and came in sight of the banner, blood-red, like that of the Moravian nuns of Bethlehem. He would take off his hat when he caught the first glimpse of it ; he might be praying, too : the prayer of as honest and brave a heart as ever beat in a breast exposed to shot and steel. Poor Bishop did more than venture his own heart, he ventured his heart's darling, and his heart's peace for the future. "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." Once he was there full three minutes before the red shawl shook out, and he got so sick, blind, and dizzy that he had to lean against an area railing. When he came to himself, the shawl was blushing, like the warm blood of life and the roses of June against the old yellow brick house, and a policeman's hand was on his arm. "Young man," said the guardian of society, "this here behavior is more than I can put up with. I have seen you awatching of the same house every night I have come upon my beat this week. If you are only a moonshiny lovyer, such as one reads of or sees at the Curry, it is no business of mine ; but you must have been with the trick, because if you happens to have burgharious intentions, I'm blowed if I'm not answerable for allowing all this spying, without reporting you to my inspector, and having you up at the office."

The red shawl was now fluttering freely, and Bishop, who was wont to

tremble before school-girls, smiled broadly in the stern face of his captor. "Policeman X.," he said, "I am looking out for a token from my wife, and there it is. She is yonder, and I cannot get near her, for she is nursing two sick ladies ill with diphtheria, a disease as infectious as the typhus, and we dare not come together to compromise other lives besides our own."

Policeman X.'s grasp relaxed, and his countenance changed from a man of stone to that of a man of flesh and blood, a family-man himself, with a pet little daughter. "I beg your pardon, sir; that is a different matter. If you are coming down upon me with a story," he said the next moment, to make up for his weakness, "I'll come down again upon you, swift and sure, before we drop our acquaintance. But I believe you are speaking the truth," relenting a second time, "and I wish your wife and her friends well through their sickness. Good evening, sir."

The epidemic had exhausted itself. The Miss Hibberds lived, and did not die. Tid was a true prophet, and never took the diphtheria, and probably, by her kind constancy, saved her neighbours from the infliction. It is needless to say how blissful was the reunion between husband and wife in the lodging at Clapham; how cordial were Miss Blount, the Miss Hibberds, Bishop, and Tid, when they all met again; how Bishop and Tid were promoted to the most honourable posts; and how Bishop's name and fame as a capital fellow and an excellent teacher rose, till Tid taught no more unless when she taught her little children, but stayed at home, and was fully occupied in taking care of her bright suburban house and garden, and her friends, young and old, rich and poor; and lastly, how Bishop and Tid would never look at that old red rag of a shawl without the water coming into their eyes, to their dying day.



The Rise of Roman Imperialism.

THERE are some coincidences of history that entertain better than a novel, and moralize more persuasively than a sermon. The foot-prints of the Deity, in human action, seem there more visible than in the more isolated results we owe to His government of the universe. The Master-Hand which coerces, to a few given limits, the extravagance of human action, shows in more palpable evidence; the thing we call human greatness resolves itself more into the theatrical pretensions in which it so often consists; and we are tempted, as we marvel over the humiliating study, to think that the loftiest of our fellows, with the best of their works, form but so many instruments of a nursery game in the hands of a superior intelligence.

What, for example, is the career of Louis Napoleon but a providential plagiarism on that of Octavius Cæsar? The most cursory recollection of our Merivale will bring up the coincidences, that both emperors rose to eminence from private stations, under the shadows of great names, not their own; that, though both were essentially civilians, both reached the successions of military uncles and the chieftainhoods of great military nations, by much the same arts and agencies, after long intrigues and by very similar tenures of power, at kindred epochs as to faith and morals, over kindred nations as to legal and social characteristics, and amid similar sources of strength and weakness. As we detect so extraordinary a reproduction of character and events in lives severed by thousands of years as to time, and thousands of miles as to place, with a whole Christian civilization between the two, how are our conceptions of the world's government altered, and how mean seem the parts played by the most successful of the world's actors, compared with that mysterious law of event—the immediate guard of Providence—which seems to force great national movements into a few given grooves, and reduces all human flesh into the almost passive instrument of ends, shaped as little as possible like those which had been so painfully rough-hewed by itself.

The young Augustus, when taking the first step in his extraordinary career, was brought in contact with a commonwealth already entered into the rapids of a new revolution, as enigmatic then as it became legible in characters of blood later. An aristocratic conspiracy had just laid low "the foremost man of all the world," and for an instant his friends "bent down, while bloody treason flourished over them." But if that "godlike stroke," as it has been called, avenged the traditional majesty of Roman right, it by no means restored it. In the utter darkness that came over

the future, consternation took possession of every party and every leader of party. Antony disguised himself as a slave, and fled when no man pursued him. Brutus and his friends fortified themselves in the Capitol; and the senators and burgesses, even when not immediately concerned, did not dare to appear in public, to question each other on the next act in the drama. Like the mangled body itself, smuggled home by servants, in the night, supported on a broken litter, the State lay helpless and exanimate, shrouded in darkness, and under improvised carriage, at the hands of slaves, scared, more than pleased, at the death of a master.

The first surprise over, the mutual concessions, which a present or proximate anarchy tends to extort, allowed the machinery of constitutional rule to get again into play, but the main power falling into the hands of the surviving consul, the debauched lieutenant of the dictator, it was soon made apparent that Antony meant to reserve the vacant succession for himself. Scarcely, on the one hand, had he directed the brands which had consumed Cæsar's body to the houses of the assassins, before he seized Amatius, a relative of the Cæsars and ardent supporter of their policy, and strangled him, with his principal followers, as traitors to the State. As the sickly youth of eighteen heard, in his school at the other side of the Adriatic, of this betrayal of the Cæsarian policy by his uncle's best friend, and acquired the certainty that the statesman who wielded the executive power of the republic by that uncle's own appointment was using it against his nephew, he might well recall the great man's touching apostrophe to Brutus, and forecast, with an anxious heart, the journey he now decided on making to the capital. His friends expounded to him the uncertainties of popular favour, and the tragic contingencies of factious times, of which his own family had just furnished two memorable instances: they dilated on the reckless ambition of Antony, on the power of the senate, and the influence of the republican party, and he was made to feel that, in aspiring to so gigantic an inheritance, he was inviting against his own bosom every sword, and against his own peace every treachery which had been turned against his uncle's.

But, were those counsels as wise as they were specious, it was fated that the individual who was to be distinguished for his prudence above all other statesmen should pay them no heed now, in taking the most important step in his career. Influenced by principle, as the new chief of the great Marian party, influenced still more by feeling, as the heir of Cæsar's wrongs, he opposed to their reason the impulse and ascendancy of a fixed determination; and we are told that his mother, charmed as well as amazed at a daring that seemed to her little less than inspired, allowed even her timidity to give way, and delivered him up to the career from which dated the imperial house of the Cæsars, with these memorable words:—"Go, my son: may the gods conduct thee whither thy high destiny calls thee: may they grant that I may soon see thee victorious over thy enemies!"

Could the veil of the future at that hour have been withdrawn, how

would she have recoiled from the drama her words prologued ! How little she surmised that the time was near when the last matron that was to survive of her illustrious progeny, should be anxiously like her questioning a dark future on the destiny of its last offshoot, and that when told the terrible truth that her son, Nero, was to reign, but to reign her murderer, should pronounce the response which epitomizes the history of the Cæsars : "Let him murder, but let him reign!" Yes, Attia, as thy son shall attain the destiny to which thou yieldest him, but the republic that gave him birth be no more, so Nero, the last of thy blood, shall ascend to empire, but Agrippina, his mother, perish ! The parricide that inaugurates the rise of thy family shall follow them into their palaces, till it sing the requiem of their fall !

But though a calamity for the youth to be drawn into the furnace of faction, he was in circumstances that made it the law of his existence, and left no substantial imprudence in the determination. His high birth and higher adoption compelled a career of greatness. He might have exclaimed with one to whom Shakspeare has given many like traits of character :—

The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right—

for it was the fatality of the man and the hour, that he could not live for himself. The Cæsarian party, as if animated by the heroic genius of its founder, was numerous, powerful, and, above all things, n earnest ; and from every extremity of the empire its myriad voices were hourly inviting the orphaned nephew to take the place of honour at their head. Even as a paltry question of personal security, there was as much hope in a vigorous campaign as under the most secluded life of privacy. The heir of the tyrant could only know safety in the strong arms of the devoted partisan, who were crowding around him their services. He had inherited, with the name, its eminence of glory or catastrophe ; and dangerous as was the position of dictator, for him it was still more dangerous to be without it.

The responsibility, solemn for any man, was terrible for one so young ; and ably as, for the most part, he discharged it, we must not so far lend ourselves to the exaggerations of history, as to believe that he owed all to his own inspirations. By the appointment of his prescient uncle, he had near him at school the counsels of an able friend destined to aid him with rare fidelity through the vicissitudes of his future fortunes.

Marcus Agrippa, subsequently celebrated both as general and minister, was like Horace—another friend of Augustus—the son of an enfranchised slave ; and his uprise to the first offices in a State, essentially patrician, indicates that the revolution, in social relations, was even greater than that which in the world of politics, perhaps, only typified it. He was, in the highest sense of the term, a man of business, possessing with force of character and natural courage that ready tact and intuitive good sense which seems more like instinct than genius, but which, if less brilliant, is nearly always more successful. His straightforward abilities were exactly

of the class required to complete the far-reaching policies, but over-subtle appliances of his young companion.

Brundisium, the first Italian station in their progress to Rome, stood to Epirus, where Augustus had been sojourning, as Boulogne to the coast of England; but instead of staking his fortunes on the chance of winning an enthusiastic reception from his uncle's legions, he cautiously landed with a few attendants at a neighbouring village, and sent thence some agents to test the feelings of the inhabitants. The soldiery and people at once flocked to his encounter, and placed themselves and city at his disposition. The offer was tempting, but the young man moderated the enthusiasm of their zeal, by the assurance that, for the present, the safety of his person and of the common cause required that he should be considered a private person. He showed no anxiety to precipitate his arrival in Rome.* As a boy-statesman he had time which he could profitably lose in letting his birthright take further root—in habituating men to the idea that they had among them the heir of Cæsar—in feeling at his leisure the pulse of Rome—in mastering the state of its parties—in throwing out silently the filaments of that web which should enclose the scattered partisans of his house into an efficient faction—and, most important of all, in letting rival parties demonstrate their reckless impracticability in forcing the current of opinion to the chieftain whose hereditary title alone typified unity, order, conciliation, and authority. A few days, therefore, after his arrival at Brundisium, we find him residing with his stepfather, Philippus, in the immediate vicinity of the country-house occupied by Cicero. It is difficult to believe that there was not some concert between Augustus and the orator in this important approximation; and this the more that Balbus, Hirtius, and Pansa, Cæsarian senators, enjoying a position in the State only second to that of Antony, found it convenient about the same time to inhabit the same neighbourhood. Cicero, by the influence of his literary and political distinctions, occupied much such a position in Rome as Monsieur Thiers, in Paris, when visited by Louis Napoleon at the end of 1848. Though a well-known opponent of despotism, his panegyric had formed a culminating point in the glory of the uncle. He was far from content, too, with the constitutional leaders, with whom it had been his wont to sympathize. What part in common, indeed, could there be between the accomplished Platonician and such impracticable stoics as Brutus? Between the graceful statesman and such unscrupulous barrack-masters as Cassius? Between the most mirthful member of good society and such envious destroyers of a benefactor as Casca? When conspiring the downfall of tyranny, they concealed their project from him, and left standing Antony—the second pillar of the tyranny—during whose life there was no safety for Cicero's.

While thus on lukewarm terms with his own party, there

* Cicero's murder took place on the 15th of March: young Octavian reached there on the 27th of April.

was much to unite him with the young pretender. Augustus seemed fashioned to the approval of an accomplished philosopher attached to young talent by the gentle instincts of a high and protective genius. Their first meeting had taken place under circumstances which almost gave to the youth the prestige of a heavenly authority, and invested his consular patron with an interest of vanity in his success. During a procession with Julius Cæsar and some friends to the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter, Cicero had been gravely relating that he had seen in his dreams a child with a celestial expression of countenance descend from the sky at the end of a golden chain, and receive, on the very spot where they were then met to worship, an emblem of chastening power from the hand of Jove himself. At this moment the young Augustus arrived to join the sacrificial group, and few were surprised to find—and least of all, we surmise, the brother augurs, Cæsar and Cicero—that his was the angelic face that had been seen in the vision. The question of personal safety, too—of moment with every politician—was paramount with Cicero, and he probably felt that while assured of the protection which the senatorial forces might afford, it was no mean wisdom to cast about a little further to secure, through the young idol of the veterans, a defence that might be nearer the true scene of his dangers. It was easy to flatter himself too, that, under his counsels, Augustus might be content to preside over Rome, as Pericles over Athens, and even if the moment had arrived when Rome could exist but under the chastening arm he has foreseen in his vision, where could he look for a master who, so much his friend, would wield power with a more discriminating favour for personal deserts?

As Augustus continued his progress to Rome, he was met at every point by his uncle's friends,—the considerable men of every town and hamlet,—and above all by the veterans to whom Cæsar had distributed lands at the close of the Gallic and Civil wars. Offers of money and personal service were everywhere addressed to him, and his entry into the city itself nearly resembled a triumph.

Antony was conspicuous among the intimate friends of his uncle, who avoided greeting him; and though Augustus treated the omission as the right of the consul's position and age, it is not likely that he overlooked the true explanation. Political expediency is a great teacher of humility, and, as it conducted Louis Napoleon in 1848 to the homes of Thiers, Chauvignier, Berryer, and even of Proudhon, in the hope of securing their help to triumph over their parties, it now brought the smiling Augustus to the door of the important functionary who, both by his authority as consul, and his force as general, had the power of making him sole master of the commonwealth. But the Roman magistrate was just now not to be cajoled into an instrument. He kept the pretender waiting in his antechamber, received him with haughty ceremony, frigidly demanded his business, could not sufficiently humiliate the youth who aspired to be the first figure in a universe, and at last sent him away with what amounted to an admission that, possessing an enormous sum of

money left by the uncle, he held to it, and not to the nephew, for much the same reason—namely, to fill the vacant place to which the latter was aspiring.

The aim of Augustus, however, was attained by the parade of the visit and the publicity of its details. The warmth of his manner, the vehemence of his language and gestures as he rejoined his followers who awaited him without, proclaimed the virtuous indignation of an injured man, and apostrophizing Antony as though still present, he exclaimed, “Why, Antony, will you oppose the honours we would pay to the great man whose office and treasures you are enjoying? At all events suffer me, his adopted son, to give the citizens the legacies he bequeathed them, and I will abandon to you the rest, content with the heritage of his name and the affection of the people.”

Antony was not long in understanding that he was not to halt midway in the policy to which he was committed, and at once followed the appropriation of the young man’s money by a decree that threw the remaining property of Cæsar into a sort of Roman chancery, which made its realization by the young man remote, if not impossible.

But there are some positions—and amongst them was that of Antony—in which the most sagacious expedients have their countervailing mischiefs. By a prescient statecraft of the dictator, which was to disturb the world after the fine organs that had devised it should have shrunk into a few pinches of ashes—a statecraft imitated by Napoleon at St. Helena—300,000 citizens were interested by small bequests in the validity and speedy administration of his will. The sturdy and impoverished veterans, the starving burgesses, who but a few weeks before had heard the eloquent Antony stirring their blood to sudden mutiny by the recital of this very generosity, must have seen with astonishment, and brooked with impatience, an apostasy of whose enormous wrong they were in their own persons such competent witnesses. Warm as was their sympathy for their young fellow-sufferer, in whom the large policies of their late chief promised such ample development, and bitter as was their indignation against the recreant Antony—scrupling at no injustice, even to them, in the pursuit of his ambition—the two sentiments must have been wrought to intensity as the young heir came forward, and selling whatever property he or his family possessed, discharged the almost fabulous bequest.

Augustus,* who commenced his career by this act of almost suicidal munificence, was naturally one of the most parsimonious of men; and though statecraft controlled in him this feeling, as every other, it might at the time have been doubted whether in forfeiting at one swoop a quarter of a million sterling, he was not sacrificing the solid sinews for the ephemeral

* It will be recollect that, in 1830, when Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was busy in his labour of displacement, and the parties refused him not only the Bonaparte property confiscated by the Bourbons, but the modest “franchise de représentation,” for which he had petitioned, he made his appeal to the sympathies of his supporters by selling his magnificent stud of horses.

stimuli of the war which was impending. But the truth appears to be that about one object he was not only earnest, but impassioned in his earnestness, and as that object was outside the weakness of his own organism, the strongest tendencies of his nature exercised no influence on its pursuit. Timid, insincere, and all-calculating, there was yet one ennobling passion from whose expression no sacrifice made him shrink, from whose enforcement no risk made him desist. The memory of his adopted father, and the avenging of his death, were things paramount in his nature; and it was this almost romantic sentiment that sent him, a mere boy, amid daggers yet red with the blood of his great protector—that urged him to sacrifice all he held most dear in his own or family fortunes, in punctilious reverence to his bequest—that, when everybody else on whom the duty fell, shrank from holding the annual games established in his honour, emboldened him to preside in person over the most magnificent celebration he could confer on them, and that extorted from senators and burghesses the exclamation—"What manner of youth is this?"—as with slender arm outstretched to the statue of his uncle, he addressed the people and strengthened his pledges to them with the oath—"So may I attain to my father's honours?"

Nor was this a fitful or evanescent phase of character. It was constantly under test. The senators had decreed that the golden chair of Julius should evermore hold the place of honour in every festival of Rome; but emancipated by his death, they naturally recoiled from perpetuating the memorial of their servitude. When Augustus, therefore, sent the chair to an edile about to give the people one of the customary spectacles, the magistrate demurred, and claimed to occupy the chief seat at a festival of which he was himself defraying the expenses. Antony was of the same opinion, but showed enough of the respect for law he was bound to as consul, to cover his contumacy with the promise that he would consult the senate. "Proceed, Antony," exclaimed the youth, in the hearing of a large crowd assembled to hear the decision; "and while you are consulting the senate, I will proceed also, and set my father's chair in the place the law marks for it."

Fortune took his audacity into favour. As the sun was said to have been surrounded by a peculiar radiance to greet the morning of his entry into Rome, so when giving his series of Cæsarian games, a brilliant comet appeared above the horizon, and remained during seven of the eleven days the festival lasted. As the entertainments were given in Cæsar's honour under the patronage of his ancestress Venus, it was natural for statecraft to suggest, and for a fond credulity to believe, that the phenomenon which day and night claimed their homage, was the great Julius himself entered formally into the divine family, of which by birth he was a member; and even to those of more infirm faith it was pleasing as a point of national vanity to find it thought that their late master was shining in his new character of divinity over the festivities celebrated in his honour. The senate bowed to a dispensation so clearly revealed.

They formally recognized the apotheosis of the man whom they had just slaughtered like an ox in the shambles ; they permitted Augustus to erect to him a star-surmounted statue in the temple of Venus ; they gave their victim's name to the contemporary month, and they appointed a college and priesthood to regulate the ceremonies and order of his worship. In other words, they recognized their young antagonist as the son of a god.

For the high-handed Antony no turn of events could have been more unfortunate. The lofty position which Caesar's murder had given him, like that given to Cavaignac by the fall of the French monarchy, was hourly receding from under his feet. In a crisis where the habit of command and the possession of power was everything, his star had paled before that of the frail boy from the Apollonian school. In vain he had succeeded to a heritage of almost absolute power, to which he had pretensions as a relative, and rights as a colleague. His wisest acts but profited a contemned stripling, and he was without a party at the moment that he had been expecting a sovereignty.

"Better," says a great authority "is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who will not be advised, for out of prison he cometh to reign." But the superb Antony, foolish as he had been, was teachable in the school of adversity, and the veterans who had so long vainly urged an accommodation between him and the young pretender, were deigned a friendlier hearing now that he had convinced himself that there remained but Augustus who could secure him the appointments he coveted. The rivals met, embraced, made their explanations, laid down their conditions, and swore a mutual service. The senators, alarmed at the reconciliation, were all the more determined to refuse Antony the large proconsular command which was to have been its firstfruits, but the two chiefs transferred the decision to the people, and Antony was thus voted an authority over some of the chief provinces of the empire, which was to accomplish, though in an unforeseen manner, the triumph of his young rival.

When the time came when Antony was expected to pay his proportion of service to the alliance, his wayward vanity again got the better of his gratitude, and he unceremoniously flung aside a friendship whose services were now for another. Augustus made his customary appeal to public opinion, and not content with exciting the discontent of the soldiers and officers under Antony's command, was hurried, it is said, by his juvenile indignation, aided perhaps by the counsels of Cicero,* to take men into pay, to get rid of his rival by a treacherous assassination.

When Antony discovered and discomfited the plot, Augustus, who knew that the Caesarians looked to the tried experience of Antony as their best hope of mastering Cassius and the chiefs of the republican conspiracy, found it necessary to do all an innocent man might do to free himself from the imputation. He protested everywhere against the

* Prudentia et balaustri et credulitatis et probant.—Cic. ad Dic. xii. 22.

"fabrication," demanded a public inquest, and when, on proceeding to the consul's residence, he was neither admitted nor allowed to see the witnesses, he publicly branded his accuser with those cheap epithets—liar, calumniator, and impostor—which befitted perhaps equally his own affectation of indignant virtue.

If the self-confidence of Antony was out of keeping with what a just estimate of his strength would have warranted, it must be confessed to have thrown no little uncertainty about the prospects of his rival, who, too young to tranquillize the confidence of the great party which desired to look up to him as its head, might find the favour of the people and the personal attachment of the veterans of little service in the isolation threatened by the distrust of the senate and the new hostility of the consul. But we are here to have a striking manifestation of the influence the moral world exercises in the physical history of our race. To haughty patriots, like Antony and Brutus, tracing their birth to the demigods of the earth or the early founders of the republic, Augustus was but a busy plotter of dubious birth, who would be better employed in the lower exercises of literature than in disturbing the magnificent game of polities which more respectable parties might reasonably enough contend about. Grey in arms or statesmanship, they could not surmise that there lay any dangerous potency in the insignificant youth, already ridiculous for his crotchet concerning some incomprehensible claim to imperial rule which neither the laws nor the constitution warranted. They saw not that for the great mass of the people—prescient of the future—the shadowy mantle of the great dictator had fallen on these slender shoulders, and that round that spacious and thoughtful brow the weird diadem was already glittering. The magic of high achievement, the enchantment of a wondrous intellectual supremacy which had passed away, were still operating through the hallowing channels of memory on the susceptible nature of the great mass of Roman paganism. The "empire" that had passed away by violence, and existed not in law, had yet a truer being than the institutions which were temporarily supplying its place. The unborn possibility of rule was in the Cæsarian principle, and nowhere else. It was the only element that combined force with authority, and therefore the only element on which that immense mass of demoralization—Roman society—could rest. The principle of a government, which had been the incarnate reign of genius on earth, had become hereditary in the ruined nature of the Roman world, and now, therefore, was hanging suspended over its head, first to strike as a sword, and then to reign as a sceptre.

To these powerful aids and accessories—which contemporary history shows not to be unique—were added others that could belong but to the great man's heir coming into the world at a period which was felt to be an epoch of great social transformation. The presentiment of a mighty change fermenting in every mind, aided no doubt by the profound statecraft of the first Cæsar, had set in movement through the empire a multitude of supernatural rumours and beliefs, which, predicting the

greatness of "the coming man," still more surely achieved it. He was the firstborn of a virgin, Attia, his mother, having been embraced by the god Apollo, or the Sun. During her pregnancy, a prodigy occurred so surely indicating that nature was producing a king for the universe, that the senate, in a decree never executed, ordered that no child of the year should be preserved.* He was born on the memorable day when Cicero crushed under the iron heel of power the conspiracy of Catiline and his associates; and on the hour of his birth, Nigidius, the astrologer, paid homage to his father, because the stars had conducted him to the certainty that in the mean room occupied by his wife the Lord of the World had been born. The consular Cicero and the illustrious orator, Catullus, had had revelations of his favour with the Father of gods and men. His mother, also, had had her vision, which spoke of a divine intermarriage with the stars, and of heaven and earth being called in to witness her glory. Even the husband, pleased by the mythological invasion on his domestic rights, had seen in his dreams a supernatural brilliancy issuing from his wife, and enlightening the darkness of a world. As a child, too, Augustus had ordered some noisy frogs in his neighbourhood to silence, and they were silent; and, having been left as infant on the floor at bed-time, was not to be found next day, until his mother and friends, after long search, descried him at the top of a high tower, with his fine face turned towards the paternal element—the Sun. When he entered Rome as the heir of the murdered dictator, the sun again shone on him with remarkable brilliancy; and when he gave his great games of Venus, the constellated Julius took up a prominent place in the heavens to consecrate, in the sight of all men, the miraculous destiny of the heaven-born ruler.

How many of these extraordinary statements were contemporaneous with Augustus, and how many were borrowed later from more sacred sources, it is hardly worth our while to inquire. It is enough for our purpose to know that there existed at the time the faith, founded on a supernatural presentiment, to confer on the cause that felicitous impetus, which in every country belongs to the popular consciousness of a predetermined success.

On the other side, now that the period had arrived when Antony, in the drunken imitation of his great chieftain, was to stake his all on a single cast of the die, on which so colossal a destiny depended, it turned out that his policy had not been so heedless as his character might have predicated. He had forced the unstable senate to pass agrarian laws for his soldiery, and to confer on them other privileges. He had secured the command of large sums of money. He had appointed his friends to important military commands, and wielding yet, as consul, the powers to give effect to his treason under the highest sanction known to the Roman constitution, was entitled, at the expiration of his year of office, to claim as his right the proconsulate of the all-important Cimilpine province.

* *Sextus: Oct. Aug. Tit. c. xciv.*

Altogether, his position was not an assured one, but it was strong in the weakness of his foes, whose forces were spread about in remote countries, or ill organized, and had to receive his attack at the time and in the manner which suited his purposes.

But his first interview with the legions that lay under his command at Brundisium admonished him that he had not yet sounded the depths of his danger. Claiming the mastery which, through such miscreants as himself, had become the right of their all-effective swords, the soldiers bade him mount his tribunal and explain as he best could the delay of their donatives, the postponement of their vengeance on the murderers of Cæsar, and his systematic ill-treatment of the *filius divi*, whom they recognized as the only heir of their late chief.

The first lieutenant of the great man had learnt not to be unworthy of an occasion that required courageous vigour. He met and overawed their mutiny by the immediate execution of the more insolent of their number; and by increasing his largesses to the rest, was able to despatch them towards the province for which he was now to contend with Decimus Brutus and the army of the senate.

But the ability and sustained energy of the debauched old soldier was of no avail against the opposition of Augustus, who "was the adder in the path that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Encouraging every friendship, soothing every antipathy, creating every aid, extracting every use, and using every influence, the young leader met Antony everywhere, and left him unable to count upon any of his resources. He waylaid him by assassins in his own house; assisted Piso and Cicero to attack him in the senate; had him scowled at by the people and veterans in the Forum, deserted by the legions he most counted upon in the field, and finally, bringing in the aid of considerable forces, enabled the new consuls, Hirtius and Pansa, to rout him as he was besieging Decimus Brutus in the fortified city of Modena.

The two consuls died of injuries received in the battle, the young Augustus being accused of causing the wounds of the one and poisoning those of the other, in the hope that their deaths would confer on him the executive power as consul, with the command of the army. But with his success had grown the jealousy of the senate, and the fancied power on his side of showing them its danger; and between the exigencies of the one and the alarms of the other, it was clear that a Gordian knot was about to be formed, which the sword of a Roman Deux Decembre could alone unfasten. As in 1851, the Legislative Assembly, in yielding to the demand of repealing the law which forbade the re-election of Louis Napoleon as President, would probably have postponed or escaped the successful *coup d'état* which followed, so it is possible that the Roman senate would have acted wisely in rescinding the constitutional enactment, which made the age of Augustus a disqualification for the consulate.

Arma tenenti
Omissa dat qui iusta negat.

To their assumption of the tones of mastery, and their orders to join Decimus Brutus in the pursuit of Antony, he replied by sending four hundred legionaries—the delegates of his army—with a petition for the consulate. The instructions of the veterans brooked no delay, and when time was asked for deliberation, one of them pointed to his sword, and curtly told the senate, “If you will not, this will.”

Like the French Assembly, “they would not,” and a few weeks later eight legions of tried soldiers entered the city amid the silence of some and the applauding shouts of others, posted themselves in the public places, and scarcely deigning to notice the show of resistance made by some of the senators, pledged their rude patriotism to secure the integrity of that appeal to the sovereign will of the Romans, to which the injustice of a cabal had reluctantly forced their master. The senators now listened to reason. They had before declared him the saviour of his country ; with the aid of the veterans they were willing now to choose him as their consul *à l'urgence*. But respect for legality was a paramount law in the policy of Augustus, and even for so patriotic an object he could not spare their enthusiasm the most insignificant of the forms of the constitution. And rightly. For who of the mighty multitude, then hallooing him on, knew so well as he, that of their once glorious republic, forms were now all that remained to them ? When every legality was duly fulfilled, the voices of the senate and people were found in happy accordance with the swords of the veterans. Augustus was elected chief magistrate of Rome and commander-in-chief of its armies ; and thus to the shame of a very high degree of civilization, did this little deformed and unscrupulous adventurer become the master of the greatest empire in the universe.

As it is not the aim of this paper to follow Augustus in his career of general, we pass the circumstances which formed the triumvirate and enabled him to destroy the last remnant of the senatorial arms, and proceed to sum up the polity by which a man so unconsidered in many of his attributes managed to retain in his hands, for the rest of a long life, the unchallenged sway over a mighty empire established by the robust arms of men accustomed to look on republican freedom as the *sine quid non* of national existence.

We may divide the public life of Augustus into two epochs.—

1. He began by finding that his natural associate, Antony, nursed views of ambition for himself, and that, with the wealth and forces of the empire in his experienced hand, he was both for him and the senate the danger of the moment. Neither old nor influential enough to stand against him alone, he was the more inclined to the party of the senate, as its alliance gave a colour of legality to his pretensions, a character of respectability to his policy, and furnished him with those materials of organization and occasions of public action above all things essential to the pretender who has a party to strengthen. Acquiring credit and consideration rather than evidencing authority, he aimed at gradually consolidating his position by a prudent system of coalition, and by allowing time in

its sure progress clearly to impersonate in him the principle of Cæsarian sovereignty.

2. When the death of Antony gave him the whole empire, and enabled him to act out his own policy, a modest abnegation of personal ambition formed the surface of each day's conduct, combined with a carefully organized plan of quietly absorbing the whole action of the state. All his arts, those "arts" which Tacitus shrewdly contrasts with the "dissimulation" of Tiberius, were directed to make the people forget the unsparing cruelty that had disgraced and helped him as the armed competitor for power. He became the just, conciliatory, and humble friend who excised jurisdiction, but under compulsion, and then but for the honour of the state, and the well-being of his fellow-citizens, his statecraft designated by himself a comedy in his dying hour, having no other aim than to convince the world that it was to do it the most precious service which can fall within the power of an individual, that he was consenting to honour it with a slavery that formed the master passion of his existence.

Doing homage to all the instincts, good and bad, of the people—making their pleasure almost his chief rule of conduct—he was generous, flexible, familiar, the personal friend of almost every Roman:—merciful by habit, severe by policy, contemning injuries to himself when not perilous to his power, as punishing injuries on the public when committed by his own household, and omitting no means of flattering the susceptibilities, personal or political, of men who were all the more ready to become his slaves the more he treated them as his fellow-citizens. He ostentatiously refused civic rights to foreigners, whose claims had been pressed on him by his wife and step-son, revived the use of the old distinguishing garment of Rome, wearing himself, after the fashion of a Cincinnatus, a homely toga spun by his wife and daughters; walked about the streets as a private citizen, plainly attired, without lictors or the ordinary insignia of magisterial power, and returned to a simple, orderly home, in whose occupation he had been preceded by a second-rate rhetorician. In the law-courts he more than once appeared to be cross-examined as an ordinary witness. He voted, as the other citizens, with his tribe, in the annual elections; went round after the manner of the ancients, with his own candidates, offering them to popular adoption, with the modest proviso, "if they deserve the honour," and patiently suffered from time to time refractory essays of independence by his senate, as ridiculous in themselves as they must have been trying to the temper of the master. In the same spirit, when his adopted sons Caius and Lucius Agrippa—the children of his sister—were made chiefs of the Equestrian Order, and promoted to the consular dignity, he earnestly sought to have the credit of declining for them the distinction, and carried so far his fear of anything approaching to kingly prerogative, or the semblance of dictatorial power, that he firmly repelled the title of *dominus*, or master, with which his flatterers sought to address him, as well as the royal surname

Romulus, for whose laudatory allusion to his second founding of the city he avowed his preference.

He often declined the consulate, perseveringly refused the dangerous honour of the formal dictatorship, ever and anon affected to resign his powers, carefully stipulated when he resumed them for a limited tenure, and constantly refused to suffer any decree for regulating the succession to the empire, in the fear of suggesting too plainly to the Romans the tale of their perished liberties.

In fact, as in semblance, this able politician was in no hurry of acquisitiveness. Satisfied with what he had, he was sure that time was but ripening for him what remained. Patiently awaiting the fundamental changes he sought, he introduced them but as fair pretexts and apt occasions offered. He organized a system of aristocratic precedence at the public games, after some public contumely on an honourable senator. On the pretext of guarding distant provinces, he established, instead of temporary levies, permanently standing armies. He introduced into the city, as a personal defence, the Praetorian guards, out of the need of subduing an election tumult, and quietly allowed anarchy to reign in Rome through months before he could be induced to accept for its repression the extraordinary powers which he then of course retained until his death. Respecting forms while changing substance, shocking no interests, breaking up no customs, adapting his views of ambition to all the circumstances of the time and people—with the soldiers no more than their general or *imperator*; with the people but a tribune or consul; with the senate but their leading member, or *princeps*; preserving every exterior of a republic over a monarchy wholly uncontrolled—his felicitous policy successfully conveyed the illusion that if greatness was his fortune, abnegation was his nature, and that the worst of all forms of government was the most propitious to the happiness of the people.

Allowing much for the necessities of event, and making every deduction for the influence of chance, both of which must count for something in the wisest combinations of human policy, we are yet compelled to the conclusion, that rarely could such achievements have stood to any man's views of policy, in a more direct relationship of cause and effect. He had to contend with five civil wars and the factions they left, with eleven conspiracies, with armies often mutinous, always insolent, with a metropolitan population frequently on the brink of famine, and an empire wide as Europe in utter derangement and confusion; yet by a magic, which some writers say was neither genius nor statesmanship, this young man managed to subdue every opponent, conquer every difficulty, and solidly establish himself in hereditary rule over the great commonwealth, to leave it at last to his family, after a fifty years' reign, in a state of unparalleled quiet and contentment.



Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. OSBORNE'S SECRET.



SBORNE and Roger came to the Hall; Molly found Roger established there when she returned after this absence at home. She gathered that Osborne was coming; but very little was said about him in any way. The squire scarcely ever left his wife's room now; he sat by her, watching her, and now and then moaning to himself. She was so much under the influence of opiates that she did not often rouse up; but when she did, she almost invariably asked for Molly. In their rare tête-à-tête, she would ask after Osborne—where he was, if he had been told, and if he was coming? In her weakened and confused state of intellect she seemed to have retained two strong impressions—one, of the sympathy with which Molly had received her confidence about Osborne; the other, of the anger which her husband entertained against him. Before the squire she never mentioned Osborne's name; nor did she seem at her ease in speaking about him to Roger, while, when she was alone with Molly, she hardly spoke of any one else. She must have had some sort of wandering idea that Roger blamed his brother, while she remembered Molly's eager defence, which she had thought hopelessly improbable at the time. At any rate she made Molly her confidant about her first-born. She sent her to ask Roger how soon he would come, for she seemed to know perfectly well that he was coming.

"Tell me all Roger says. He will tell you."

But it was several days before Molly could ask Roger any questions; and meanwhile Mrs. Hamley's state had materially altered. At length Molly came upon Roger sitting in the library, his head buried in his hands. He did not hear her footstep till she was close beside him. Then

he lifted up his face, red, and stained with tears, his hair all ruffled up and in disorder.

"I've been wanting to see you alone," she began. "Your mother does so want some news of your brother Osborne. She told me last week to ask you about him, but I did not like to speak of him before your father."

"She hardly ever named him to me."

"I don't know why; for to me she used to talk of him perpetually. I have seen so little of her this week, and I think she forgets a great deal now. Still, if you don't mind, I should like to be able to tell her something if she asks me again."

He put his head again between his hands, and did not answer her for some time.

"What does she want to know?" said he, at last. "Does she know that Osborne is coming soon—any day?"

"Yes. But she wants to know where he is."

"I can't tell you. I don't exactly know. I believe he's abroad, but I'm not sure."

"But you've sent papa's letter to him?"

"I've sent it to a friend of his who will know better than I do where he's to be found. You must know that he isn't free from creditors, Molly. You can't have been one of the family, like a child of the house almost, without knowing that much. For that and for other reasons I don't exactly know where he is."

"I will tell her so. You are sure he will come?"

"Quite sure. But, Molly, I think my mother may live some time yet; don't you? Dr. Nicholls said so yesterday when he was here with your father. He said she had rallied more than he had ever expected. You're not afraid of any change that makes you so anxious for Osborne's coming?"

"No. It's only for her that I asked. She did seem so to crave for news of him. I think she dreamed of him; and then when she wakened it was a relief to her to talk about him to me. She always seemed to associate me with him. We used to speak so much of him when we were together."

"I don't know what we should any of us have done without you. You've been like a daughter to my mother."

"I do so love her," said Molly, softly.

"Yes; I see. Have you ever noticed that she sometimes calls you 'Fanny?' It was the name of a little sister of ours who died. I think she often takes you for her. It was partly that, and partly that at such a time as this one can't stand on formalities, that made me call you Molly. I hope you don't mind it?"

"No; I like it. But will you tell me something more about your brother? She really hungers for news of him."

"She'd better ask me herself. Yet, no! I am so involved by promises of secrecy, Molly, that I couldn't satisfy her if she once began

to question me. I believe he's in Belgium, and that he went there about a fortnight ago, partly to avoid his creditors. You know my father has refused to pay his debts?"

"Yes; at least, I knew something like it."

"I don't believe my father could raise the money all at once without having recourse to steps which he would exceedingly recoil from. Yet for the time it places Osborne in a very awkward position."

"I think what vexes your father a good deal is some mystery as to how the money was spent."

"If my mother ever says anything about that part of the affair," said Roger, hastily, "assure her from me that there's nothing of vice or wrong-doing about it. I can't say more: I'm tired. But set her mind at ease on this point."

"I'm not sure if she remembers all her painful anxiety about this," said Molly. "She used to speak a great deal to me about him before you came, when your father seemed so angry. And now, whenever she sees me she wants to talk on the old subject; but she doesn't remember so clearly. If she were to see him I don't believe she would recollect why she was uneasy about him while he was absent."

"He must be here soon. I expect him every day," said Roger, uneasily.

"Do you think your father will be very angry with him?" asked Molly, with as much timidity as if the squire's displeasure might be directed against her.

"I don't know," said Roger. "My mother's illness may alter him; but he didn't easily forgive us formerly. I remember once—but that is nothing to the purpose. I can't help fancying that he has put himself under some strong restraint for my mother's sake, and that he won't express much. But it doesn't follow that he will forget it. My father is a man of few affections, but what he has are very strong; he feels anything that touches him on these points deeply and permanently. That unlucky valuing of the property! It has given my father the idea of post-obits ——"

"What are they?" asked Molly.

"Raising money to be paid on my father's death, which, of course, involves calculations as to the duration of his life."

"How shocking!" said she.

"I'm as sure as I am of my own life that Osborne never did anything of the kind. But my father expressed his suspicions in language that irritated Osborne; and he doesn't speak out, and won't justify himself even as much as he might; and, much as he loves me, I've but little influence over him, or else he would tell my father all. Well, we must leave it to time," he added, sighing. "My mother would have brought us all right, if she'd been what she once was."

He turned away, leaving Molly very sad. She knew that every member of the family she cared for so much was in trouble, out of which she saw no exit; and her small power of helping them was diminishing

day by day as Mrs. Hamley sank more and more under the influence of opiates and stupefying illness. Her father had spoken to her only this very day of the desirableness of her returning home for good. Mrs. Gibson wanted her—for no particular reason, but for many small fragments of reasons. Mrs. Hamley had ceased to want her much, only occasionally appearing to remember her existence. Her position (her father thought—the idea had not entered her head) in a family of which the only woman was an invalid confined to bed, was becoming awkward. But Molly had begged hard to remain two or three days longer—only that—only till Friday. If Mrs. Hamley should want her (she argued, with tears in her eyes), and should hear that she had left the house, she would think her so unkind, so ungrateful!

"My dear child, she's getting past wanting any one! The keenness of earthly feelings is deadened."

"Papa, that is worst of all. I cannot bear it. I won't believe it. She may not ask for me again, and may quite forget me; but I'm sure, to the very last, if the medicines don't stupefy her, she will look round for the squire and her children. For poor Osborne most of all; because he's in sorrow."

Mr. Gibson shook his head, but said nothing in reply. In a minute or two he asked,—

"I don't like to take you away while you even fancy you can be of use or comfort to one who has been so kind to you. But, if she hasn't wanted you before Friday, will you be convinced, will you come home willingly?"

"If I go then, I may see her once again, even if she hasn't asked for me?" inquired Molly.

"Yes, of course. You must make no noise, no step; but you may go in and see her. I must tell you, I'm almost certain she won't ask for you."

"But she may, papa. I will go home on Friday, if she has not. I think she will."

So Molly hung about the house, trying to do all she could out of the sick-room, for the comfort of those in it. They only came out for meals, or for necessary business, and found little time for talking to her, so her life was solitary enough, waiting for the call that never came. The evening of the day on which she had had the above conversation with Roger, Osborne arrived. He came straight into the drawing-room, where Molly was seated on the rug, reading by firelight, as she did not like to ring for candles merely for her own use. Osborne came in, with a kind of hurry, which almost made him appear as if he would trip himself up, and fall down. Molly rose. He had not noticed her before; now he came forwards, and took hold of both her hands, leading her into the full flickering light, and straining his eyes to look into her face.

"How is she? You will tell me—you must know the truth! I've travelled day and night since I got your father's letter."

Before she could frame her answer, he had sate down in the nearest chair, covering his eyes with his hand.

"She's very ill," said Molly. "That you know; but I don't think she suffers much pain. She has wanted you sadly."

He groaned aloud. "My father forbade me to come."

"I know!" said Molly, anxious to prevent his self-reproach. "Your brother was away, too. I think no one knew how ill she was—she had been an invalid for so long."

"You know—— Yes! she told you a great deal—she was ~~very~~ fond of you. And God knows how I loved her. If I had not been forbidden to come home, I should have told her all. Does my father know of my coming now?"

"Yes," said Molly; "I told him papa had sent for you."

Just at that moment the squire came in. He had not heard of Osborne's arrival, and was seeking Molly to ask her to write a letter for him.

Osborne did not stand up when his father entered. He was too much exhausted, too much oppressed by his feelings, and also too much estranged by his father's angry, suspicious letters. If he had come forward with any manifestation of feeling at this moment, everything might have been different. But he waited for his father to see him before he uttered a word. All that the squire said when his eye fell upon him at last was,—

"You here, sir!"

And, breaking off in the directions he was giving to Molly, he abruptly left the room. All the time his heart was yearning after his first-born; but mutual pride kept them asunder. Yet he went straight to the butler, and asked of him when Mr. Osborne had arrived, and how he had come, and if he had had any refreshment—dinner or what—since his arrival?

"For I think I forget everything now!" said the poor squire, putting his hand up to his head. "For the life of me, I can't remember whether we've had dinner or not; these long nights, and all this sorrow and watching, quite bewilder me."

"Perhaps, sir, you will take some dinner with Mr. Osborne. Mrs. Morgan is sending up his directly. You hardly sate down at dinner-time, sir, you thought my mistress wanted something."

"Ay! I remember now. No! I won't have any more. Give Mr. Osborne what wine he chooses. Perhaps he can eat and drink." So the squire went away upstairs with bitterness as well as sorrow in his heart.

When lights were brought, Molly was struck with the change in Osborne. He looked haggard and worn; perhaps with travelling and anxiety. Not quite such a dainty gentleman either, as Molly had thought him, when she had last seen him calling on her stepmother, two months before. But she liked him better now. The tone of his remarks pleased her more. He was simpler, and less ashamed of showing his feelings. He asked after Roger in a warm, longing kind of way. Roger was out: he had ridden to Ashcombe to transact some business for the squire.

Osborne evidently wished for his return; and hung about restlessly in the drawing-room after he had dined.

" You are sure I may not see her to-night?" he asked Molly, for the third or fourth time.

" No, indeed. I will go up again if you like it. But Mrs. Jones, the nurse Dr. Nicholls sent, is a very decided person. I went up while you were at dinner, and Mrs. Hamley had just taken her drops, and was on no account to be disturbed by seeing any one, much less by any excitement."

Osborne kept walking up and down the long drawing-room, half talking to himself, half to Molly.

" I wish Roger would come. He seems to be the only one to give me a welcome. Does my father always live upstairs in my mother's room, Miss Gibson ? "

" He has done since her last attack. I believe he reproaches himself for not having been enough alarmed before."

" You heard all the words he said to me : they were not much of a welcome, were they ? And my dear mother, who always—whether I was to blame or not—I suppose Roger is sure to come home to-night ? "

" Quite sure."

" You are staying here, are you not ? Do you often see my mother, or does this omnipotent nurse keep you out too ? "

" Mrs. Hamley hasn't asked for me for three days now, and I don't go into her room unless she asks. I'm leaving on Friday, I believe."

" My mother was very fond of you, I know."

After a while he said, in a voice that had a great deal of sensitive pain in its tone,—

" I suppose—do you know whether she is quite conscious—quite herself ? "

" Not always conscious," said Molly, tenderly. " She has to take so many opiates. But she never wanders, only forgets, and sleeps."

" Oh, mother, mother ! " said he, stopping suddenly, and hanging over the fire, his hands on the chimney-piece.

When Roger came home, Molly thought it time to retire. Poor girl! it was getting time for her to leave this scene of distress in which she could be of no use. She sobbed herself to sleep this Tuesday night. Two days more, and it would be Friday; and she would have to wrench up the roots she had shot down into this ground. The weather was bright the next morning; and morning and sunny weather cheer up young hearts. Molly sat in the dining-room making tea for the gentlemen as they came down. She could not help hoping that the squire and Osborne might come to a better understanding before she left; for after all, in the discussion between father and son, lay a bitterer sting than in the illness sent by God. But though they met at the breakfast-table, they purposely avoided addressing each other. Perhaps the natural subject of conversation between the two, at such a time, would have been Osborne's

long journey the night before; but he had never spoken of the place he had come from, whether north, south, east, or west, and the squire did not choose to allude to anything that might bring out what his son wished to conceal. Again, there was an unexpressed idea in both their minds that Mrs. Hamley's present illness was much aggravated, if not entirely brought on, by the discovery of Osborne's debts; so, many inquiries and answers on that head were tabooed. In fact, their attempts at easy conversation were limited to local subjects, and principally addressed to Molly or Roger. Such intercourse was not productive of pleasure, or even of friendly feeling, though there was a thin outward surface of politeness and peace. Long before the day was over, Molly wished that she had acceded to her father's proposal, and gone home with him. No one seemed to want her. Mrs. Jones, the nurse, assured her time after time that Mrs. Hamley had never named her name; and her small services in the sick-room were not required since there was a regular nurse. Osborne and Roger seemed all in all to each other; and Molly now felt how much the short conversations she had had with Roger had served to give her something to think about, all during the remainder of her solitary days. Osborne was extremely polite, and even expressed his gratitude to her for her attentions to his mother in a very pleasant manner; but he appeared to be unwilling to show her any of the deeper feelings of his heart, and almost ashamed of his exhibition of emotion the night before. He spoke to her as any agreeable young man speaks to any pleasant young lady; but Molly almost resented this. It was only the squire who seemed to make her of any account. He gave her letters to write, small bills to reckon up; and she could have kissed his hands for thankfulness.

The last afternoon of her stay at the Hall came. Roger had gone out on the squire's business. Molly went into the garden, thinking over the last summer, when Mrs. Hamley's sofa used to be placed under the old cedar-tree on the lawn, and when the warm air seemed to be scented with roses and sweetbriar. Now, the trees were leafless,—there was no sweet odour in the keen frosty air; and looking up at the house, there were the white sheets of blinds, shutting out the pale winter sky from the invalid's room. Then she thought of the day her father had brought her the news of his second marriage: the thicket was tangled with dead weeds and rime and hoar-frost; and the beautiful fine articulation of branches and boughs and delicate twigs were all intertwined in leafless distinctness against the sky. Could she ever be so passionately unhappy again? Was it goodness, or was it numbness, that made her feel as though life was too short to be troubled much about anything? death seemed the only reality. She had neither energy nor heart to walk far or briskly; and turned back towards the house. The afternoon sun was shining brightly on the windows; and, stirred up to unusual activity by some unknown cause, the housemaids had opened the shutters and windows of the generally unused library. The middle window was also a door; the white-painted wood went half-way up. Molly turned along the little flag-paved path that led past the library

windows to the gate in the white railings at the front of the house, and went in at the opened doors. She had had leave given to choose out any books she wished to read, and to take them home with her; and it was just the sort of half-dawdling employment suited to her taste this afternoon. She mounted on the ladder to get to a particular shelf high up in a dark corner of the room; and finding there some volume that looked interesting, she sat down on the step to read part of it. There she sat, in her bonnet and cloak, when Osborne suddenly came in. He did not see her at first; indeed, he seemed in such a hurry that he probably might not have noticed her at all, if she had not spoken.

"Am I in your way? I only came here for a minute to look for some books." She came down the steps as she spoke, still holding the book in her hand.

"Not at all. It is I who am disturbing you. I must just write a letter for the post, and then I shall be gone. Is not this open door too cold for you?"

"Oh, no. It is so fresh and pleasant."

She began to read again, sitting on the lowest step of the ladder; he to write at the large old-fashioned writing-table close to the window. There was a minute or two of profound silence, in which the rapid scratching of Osborne's pen upon the paper was the only sound. Then came a click of the gate, and Roger stood at the open door. His face was towards Osborne, sitting in the light; his back to Molly, crouched up in her corner. He held out a letter, and said in hoarse breathlessness—

"Here's a letter from your wife, Osborne. I went past the post-office and thought——"

Osborne stood up, angry dismay upon his face.

"Roger! what have you done! Don't you see her?"

Roger looked round, and Molly stood up in her corner, red, trembling, miserable, as though she were a guilty person. Roger entered the room. All three seemed to be equally dismayed. Molly was the first to speak; she came forward and said—

"I am so sorry! You didn't wish me to hear it, but I couldn't help it. You will trust me, won't you?" and turning to Roger she said to him with tears in her eyes—"Please say you know I shall not tell."

"We can't help it," said Osborne, gloomily. "Only Roger, who knew of what importance it was, ought to have looked round him before speaking."

"So I should," said Roger. "I'm more vexed with myself than you can conceive. Not but what I'm as sure of you as of myself," continued he, turning to Molly.

"Yes; but," said Osborne, "you see how many chances there are that even the best-meaning persons may let out what it is of such consequence to me to keep secret."

"I know you think it so," said Roger.

"Well, don't let us begin that old discussion again—at any rate, not before a third person."

Molly had had hard work all this time to keep from crying. Now that she was alluded to as the third person before whom conversation was to be restrained, she said—

"I'm going away. Perhaps I ought not to have been here. I'm very sorry—very. But I will try and forget what I've heard."

"You can't do that," said Osborne, still ungraciously. "But will you promise me never to speak about it to any one—not even to me, or to Roger? Will you try to act and speak as if you had never heard it? I'm sure, from what Roger has told me about you, that if you give me this promise I may rely upon it."

"Yes; I will promise," said Molly, putting out her hand as a kind of pledge. Osborne took it, but rather as if the action was superfluous. She added, "I think I should have done so, even without a promise. But it is, perhaps, better to bind oneself. I will go away now. I wish I'd never come into this room."

She put down her book on the table very softly, and turned to leave the room, choking down her tears until she was in the solitude of her own chamber. But Roger was at the door before her, holding it open for her, and reading—she felt that he was reading—her face. He held out his hand for hers, and his firm grasp expressed both sympathy and regret for what had occurred.

She could hardly keep back her sobs till she reached her bedroom. Her feelings had been overwrought for some time past, without finding the natural vent in action. The leaving Hamley Hall had seemed so sad before; and now she was troubled with having to bear away a secret which she ought never to have known, and the knowledge of which had brought out a very uncomfortable responsibility. Then there would arise a very natural wonder as to who was Osborne's wife. Molly had not stayed so long and so intimately in the Hamley family without being well aware of the manner in which the future lady of Hamley was planned for. The squire, for instance, partly in order to show that Osborne, his heir, was above the reach of Molly Gibson, the doctor's daughter, in the early days before he knew Molly well, had often alluded to the grand, the high, and the wealthy marriage which Hamley of Hamley, as represented by his clever, brilliant, handsome son Osborne, might be expected to make. Mrs. Hamley, too, unconsciously on her part, showed the projects that she was constantly devising for the reception of the unknown daughter-in-law that was to be.

"The drawing-room must be refurnished when Osborne marries"—or "Osborne's wife will like to have the west suite of rooms to herself; it will perhaps be a trial to her to live with the old couple; but we must arrange it so that she will feel it as little as possible"—"Of course, when Mrs. Osborne comes we must try and give her a new carriage; the old one does well enough for us"—these, and similar speeches had given

Molly the impression of the future Mrs. Osborne as of some beautiful grand young lady, whose very presence would make the old Hall into a stately, formal mansion, instead of the pleasant, unceremonious home that it was at present. Osborne, too, who had spoken with such languid criticism to Mrs. Gibson about various country belles, and even in his own home was apt to give himself airs—only at home his airs were poetically fastidious, while with Mrs. Gibson they had been socially fastidious—what unspeakably elegant beauty had he chosen for his wife? Who had satisfied him; and yet satisfying him, had to have her marriage kept in concealment from his parents? At length Molly tore herself up from her wonderings. It was of no use: she could not find out; she might not even try. The blank wall of her promise blocked up the way. Perhaps it was not even right to wonder, and endeavour to remember slight speeches, casual mentions of a name, so as to piece them together into something coherent. Molly dreaded seeing either of the brothers again; but they all met at dinner-time as if nothing had happened. The squire was taciturn, either from melancholy or displeasure. He had never spoken to Osborne since his return, excepting about the commonest trifles, when intercourse could not be avoided; and his wife's state oppressed him like a heavy cloud coming over the light of his day. Osborne put on an indifferent manner to his father, which Molly felt sure was assumed; but it was not conciliatory, for all that. Roger, quiet, steady, and natural, talked more than all the others; but he too was uneasy, and in distress on many accounts. To-day he principally addressed himself to Molly; entering into rather long narrations of late discoveries in natural history, which kept up the current of talk without requiring much reply from any one. Molly had expected Osborne to look something different from usual—conscious, or ashamed, or resentful, or even "married"—but he was exactly the Osborne of the morning—handsome, elegant, languid in manner and in look; cordial with his brother, polite towards her, secretly uneasy at the state of things between his father and himself. She would never have guessed the concealed romance which lay *perdu* under that every-day behaviour. She had always wished to come into direct contact with a love-story: here she was, and she only found it very uncomfortable; there was a sense of concealment and uncertainty about it all; and her honest straightforward father, her quiet life at Hollingsford, which, even with all its drawbacks, was above-board, and where everybody knew what everybody was doing, seemed secure and pleasant in comparison. Of course she felt great pain at quitting the Hall, and at the mute farewell she had taken of her sleeping and unconscious friend. But leaving Mrs. Hamley now was a different thing to what it had been a fortnight ago. Then she was wanted at any moment, and felt herself to be of comfort. Now her very existence seemed forgotten by the poor lady whose body appeared to be living so long after her soul.

She was sent home in the carriage, loaded with true thanks from

every one of the family. Osborne ransacked the houses for flowers for her; Roger had chosen her cut books of every kind. The squire himself kept shaking her hand, without being able to speak his gratitude, till at last he had taken her in his arms, and kissed her as he would have done a daughter.

CHAPTER XIX.

CYNTHIA'S ARRIVAL.

MOLLY's father was not at home when she returned; and there was no one to give her a welcome. Mrs. Gibson was out paying calls, the servants told Molly. She went upstairs to her own room, meaning to unpack and arrange her borrowed books. Rather to her surprise she saw the chamber, corresponding to her own, being dusted; water and towels too were being carried in.

"Is any one coming?" she asked of the housemaid.

"Missus's daughter from France. Miss Kirkpatrick is coming to-morrow."

Was Cynthia coming at last? Oh, what a pleasure it would be to have a companion, a girl, a sister of her own age! Molly's depressed spirits sprang up again with bright elasticity. She longed for Mrs. Gibson's return, to ask her all about it: it must be very sudden, for Mr. Gibson had said nothing of it at the Hall the day before. No quiet reading now; the books were hardly put away with Molly's usual neatness. She went down into the drawing-room, and could not settle to anything. At last Mrs. Gibson came home, tired out with her walk and her heavy velvet cloak. Until that was taken off, and she had rested herself for a few minutes, she seemed quite unable to attend to Molly's questions.

"Oh, yes! Cynthia is coming home to-morrow, by the 'Umpire,' which passes through at ten o'clock. What an oppressive day it is for the time of the year! I really am almost ready to faint. Cynthia heard of some opportunity, I believe, and was only too glad to leave school a fortnight earlier than we planned. She never gave me the chance of writing to say I did, or did not, like her coming so much before the time; and I shall have to pay for her just the same as if she had stopped. And I meant to have asked her to bring me a French bonnet; and then you could have had one made after mine. But I'm very glad she's coming, poor dear."

"Is anything the matter with her?" asked Molly.

"Oh, no! Why should there be?"

"You called her 'poor dear,' and it made me afraid lest she might be ill."

"Oh, no! It's only a way I got into, when Mr. Kirkpatrick died. A fatherless girl—you know one always does call them 'poor dears'."

Oh, no ! Cynthia never is ill. She's as strong as a horse. She never would have felt to-day as I have done. Could you get me a glass of wine and a biscuit, my dear ? I'm really quite faint."

Mr. Gibson was much more excited about Cynthia's arrival than her own mother was. He anticipated her coming as a great pleasure to Molly, on whom, in spite of his recent marriage and his new wife, his interests principally centred. He even found time to run upstairs and see the bedrooms of the two girls ; for the furniture of which he had paid a pretty round sum.

" Well, I suppose young ladies like their bedrooms decked out in this way ! It's very pretty certainly, but——"

" I like my own old room better, papa ; but perhaps Cynthia is accustomed to such decking up."

" Perhaps ; at any rate, she'll see we've tried to make it pretty. Yours is like hers. That's right. It might have hurt her, if hers had been smarter than yours. Now, good-night in your fine flimsy bed."

Molly was up betimes—almost before it was light—arranging her pretty Hamley flowers in Cynthia's room. She could hardly eat her breakfast that morning. She ran upstairs and put on her things, thinking that Mrs. Gibson was quite sure to go down to the "Angel Inn," where the "Umpire" stopped, to meet her daughter after a two years' absence. But to her surprise Mrs. Gibson had arranged herself at her great worsted-work frame, just as usual ; and she, in her turn, was astonished at Molly's bonnet and cloak.

" Where are you going so early, child ? The fog hasn't cleared away yet."

" I thought you would go and meet Cynthia ; and I wanted to go with you."

" She will be here in half an hour ; and dear papa has told the gardener to take the wheelbarrow down for her luggage. I'm not sure if he is not gone himself."

" Then are not you going ? " asked Molly, with a good deal of disappointment.

" No, certainly not. She will be here almost directly. And, besides, I don't like to expose my feelings to every passer-by in High Street. You forget I have not seen her for two years, and I hate scenes in the market-place."

She settled herself to her work again ; and Molly, after some consideration, gave up her own grief, and employed herself in looking out of the downstairs window which commanded the approach from the town.

" Here she is—here she is ! " she cried out at last. Her father was walking by the side of a tall young lady ; William the gardener was wheeling along a great cargo of baggage. Molly flew to the front-door, and had it wide open to admit the new comer some time before she arrived.

" Well ! here she is. Molly, this is Cynthia. Cynthia, Molly. You're to be sisters, you know."

Molly saw the beautiful, tall, swaying figure, against the light of the open door, but could not see any of the features that were, for the moment, in shadow. A sudden gush of shyness had come over her just at the instant, and quenched the embrace she would have given a moment before. But Cynthia took her in her arms, and kissed her on both cheeks.

"Here's mamma," she said, looking beyond Molly on to the stairs where Mrs. Gibson stood, wrapped up in a shawl, and shivering in the cold. She ran past Molly and Mr. Gibson, who rather averted their eyes from this first greeting between mother and child.

Mrs. Gibson said—

"Why, how you are grown, darling! You look quite a woman."

"And so I am," said Cynthia. "I was before I went away; I've hardly grown since,—except, it is always to be hoped, in wisdom."

"Yes! That we will hope," said Mrs. Gibson, in rather a meaning way. Indeed there were evidently hidden allusions in their seeming commonplace speeches. When they all came into the full light and repose of the drawing-room, Molly was absorbed in the contemplation of Cynthia's beauty. Perhaps her features were not regular; but the changes in her expressive countenance gave one no time to think of that. Her smile was perfect; her pouting charming; the play of the face was in the mouth. Her eyes were beautifully shaped, but their expression hardly seemed to vary. In colouring she was not ~~too~~ like her mother; only she had not so much of the red-haired tints in her complexion; and her long-shaped, serious grey eyes were fringed with dark lashes, instead of her mother's insipid flaxen ones. Molly fell in love with her, so to speak, on the instant. She sat there warming her feet and hands, as much at her ease as if she had been there all her life; not particularly attending to her mother—who, all the time, was studying either her or her dress—measuring Molly and Mr. Gibson with grave observant looks, as if guessing how she should like them.

"There's hot breakfast ready for you in the dining-room, when you are ready for it," said Mr. Gibson. "I'm sure you must want it after your night journey." He looked round at his wife, at Cynthia's mother, but she did not seem inclined to leave the warm room again.

"Molly will take you to your room, darling," said she; "it is near hers, and she has got her things to take off. I'll come down and sit in the dining-room while you are having your breakfast, but I really am afraid of the cold now."

Cynthia rose and followed Molly upstairs.

"I'm so sorry there isn't a fire for you," said Molly, "but—I suppose it wasn't ordered; and, of course, I don't give any orders. Here is some hot water, though."

"Stop a minute," said Cynthia, getting hold of both Molly's hands, and looking steadily into her face, but in such a manner that she did not dislike the inspection.

"I think I shall like you. I am so glad! I was afraid I shoidld not. We're all in a very awkward position together, aren't we? I like your father's looks, though."

Molly could not help smiling at the way this was said. Cynthia replied to her smile.

"Ah, you may laugh. But I don't know that I am easy to get on with; mamma and I didn't suit when we were last together. But perhaps we are each of us wiser now. Now, please leave me for a quarter of an hour. I don't want anything more."

Molly went into her own room, waiting to show Cynthia down to the dining-room. Not that, in the moderate-sized house, there was any difficulty in finding the way. A very little trouble in conjecturing would enable a stranger to discover any room. But Cynthia had so captivated Molly, that she wanted to devote herself to the new-comer's service. Ever since she had heard of the probability of her having a sister—(she called her a sister, but whether it was a Scotch sister, or a sister *à la mode de Bretagne*, would have puzzled most people)—Molly had allowed her fancy to dwell much on the idea of Cynthia's coming; and in the short time since they had met, Cynthia's unconscious power of fascination had been exercised upon her. Some people have this power. Of course, its effects are only manifested in the susceptible. A school-girl may be found in every school who attracts and influences all the others, not by her virtues, nor her beauty, nor her sweetness, nor her cleverness, but by something that can neither be described nor reasoned upon. It is the something alluded to in the old lines:—

Love me not for comely grace,
For my pleasing eye and face;
No, nor for my constant heart,—
For these may change, and turn to ill,
And thus true love may sever.
But love me on, and know not why,
So hast thou the same reason still
To dote upon me ever.

A woman will have this charm, not only over men but over her own sex; it cannot be defined, or rather it is so delicate a mixture of many gifts and qualities that it is impossible to decide on the proportions of each. Perhaps it is incompatible with very high principle; as its essence seems to consist in the most exquisite power of adaptation to varying people and still more various moods; "being all things to all men." At any rate, Molly might soon have been aware that Cynthia was not remarkable for unflinching morality; but the glamour thrown over her would have prevented Molly from any attempt at penetrating into and judging her companion's character, even had such processes been the least in accordance with her own disposition.

Cynthia was very beautiful, and was so well aware of this fact that she had forgotten to care about it; no one with such loveliness ever appeared so little conscious of it. Molly would watch her perpetually as she moved,

about the room, with the free stately step of some wild animal of the forest—moving almost, as it were, to the continual sound of music. Her dress, too, though now to our ideas it would be considered ugly and disfiguring, was suited to her complexion and figure, and the fashion of it subdued within due bounds by her exquisite taste. It was inexpensive enough, and the changes in it were but few. Mrs. Gibson professed herself shocked to find that Cynthia had but four gowns, when she might have stocked herself so well, and brought over so many useful French patterns, if she had but patiently awaited her mother's answer to the letter which she had sent announcing her return by the opportunity madame had found for her. Molly was hurt for Cynthia at all these speeches ; she thought they implied that the pleasure which her mother felt in seeing her a fortnight sooner after her two years' absence was inferior to that which she would have received from a bundle of silver-paper patterns. But Cynthia took no apparent notice of the frequent recurrence of these small complaints. Indeed, she received much of what her mother said with a kind of complete indifference, that made Mrs. Gibson hold her rather in awe ; and she was much more communicative to Molly than to her own child. With regard to dress, however, Cynthia soon showed that she was her mother's own daughter in the manner in which she could use her deft and nimble fingers. She was a capital workwoman ; and, unlike Molly, who excelled in plain sewing, but had no notion of dress-making or millinery, she could repeat the fashions she had only seen in passing along the streets of Boulogne, with one or two pretty rapid movements of her hands, as she turned and twisted the ribbons and gauze her mother furnished her with. So she refurbished Mrs. Gibson's wardrobe ; doing it all in a sort of contemptuous manner, the source of which Molly could not quite make out.

Day after day the course of these small frivolities was broken in upon by the news Mr. Gibson brought of Mrs. Hamley's nearer approach to death. Molly—very often sitting by Cynthia, and surrounded by ribbon, and wire, and net—heard the bulletins like the toll of a funeral bell at a marriage feast. Her father sympathized with her. It was the loss of a dear friend to him too ; but he was so accustomed to death, that it seemed to him but as it was, the natural end of all things human. To Molly, the death of some one she had known so well and loved so much, was a sad and gloomy phenomenon. She loathed the small vanities with which she was surrounded, and would wander out into the frosty garden, and pace the walk, which was both sheltered and concealed by evergreens.

At length—and yet it was not so long, not a fortnight since Molly had left the Hall—the end came. Mrs. Hamley had sunk out of life as gradually as she had sunk out of consciousness and her place in this world. The quiet waves closed over her, and her place knew her no more.

"They all sent their love to you, Molly," said her father. "Roger Hamley said he knew how you would feel it."

Mr. Gibson had come in very late, and was having a solitary dinner

in the dining-room. Molly was sitting near him to keep him company. Cynthia and her mother were upstairs. The latter was trying on a head-dress which Cynthia had made for her.

Molly remained downstairs after her father had gone out afresh on his final round among his town patients. The fire was growing very low, and the lights were waning. Cynthia came softly in, and taking Molly's listless hand, that hung down by her side, sat at her feet on the rug, chafing her chilly fingers without speaking. The tender action thawed the tears that had been gathering heavily at Molly's heart, and they came dropping down her cheeks.

"You loved her dearly, did you not, Molly?"

"Yes," sobbed Molly; and then there was a silence.

"Had you known her long?"

"No, not a year. But I had seen a great deal of her. I was almost like a daughter to her; she said so. Yet I never bid her good-by, or anything. Her mind became weak and confused."

"She had only sons, I think?"

"No; only Mr. Osborne and Mr. Roger Hamley. She had a daughter once—'Fanny.' Sometimes, in her illness, she used to call me 'Fanny!'"

The two girls were silent for some time, both gazing into the fire. Cynthia spoke first:—

"I wish I could love people as you do, Molly!"

"Don't you?" said the other, in surprise.

"No. A good number of people love me, I believe, or at least they think they do; but I never seem to care much for any one. I do believe I love you, little Molly, whom I have only known for ten days, better than any one."

"Not than your mother?" said Molly, in grave astonishment.

"Yes, than my mother!" replied Cynthia, half-smiling. "It's very shocking, I dare say; but it is so. Now, don't go and condemn me. I don't think love for one's mother quite comes by nature; and remember how much I have been separated from mine! I loved my father, if you will," she continued, with the force of truth in her tone, and then she stopped; "but he died when I was quite a little thing, and no one believes that I remember him. I heard mamma say to a caller, not a fortnight after his funeral, 'Oh, no, Cynthia is too young; she has quite forgotten him'—and I bit my lips, to keep from crying out, 'Papa! papa! have I?' But it's of no use. Well, then mamma had to go out as a governess; she couldn't help it, poor thing! but she didn't much care for parting with me. I was a trouble, I dare say. So I was sent to school at four years old; first one school, and then another; and in the holidays, ——— went to stay at grand houses, and I was generally left with the schoolmistresses. Once I went to the Towers; and mamma lectured me continually, and yet I was very naughty, I believe. And so I never went again; and I was very glad of it, for it was a horrid place."

"That it was," said Molly, who remembered her own day of tribulation there.

"And once I went to London, to stay with my uncle Kirkpatrick. He is a lawyer, and getting on now; but then he was poor enough, and had six or seven children. It was winter-time, and we were all shut up in a small house in Doughty Street. But, after all, that wasn't so bad."

"But then you lived with your mother when she began school at Ashcombe. Mr. Preston told me that, when I stayed that day at the Manor-house."

"What did he tell you?" asked Cynthia, almost fiercely.

"Nothing but that. Oh, yes! He praised your beauty, and wanted me to tell you what he had said."

"I should have hated you if you had," said Cynthia.

"Of course I never thought of doing such a thing," replied Molly. "I didn't like him; and Lady Harriet spoke of him the next day, as if he wasn't a person to be liked."

Cynthia was quite silent. At length she said,—

"I wish I was good!"

"So do I," said Molly, simply. She was thinking again of Mrs. Hamley,—

Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

and "goodness" just then seemed to her to be the only endearing thing in the world.

"Nonsense, Molly! You are good. At least, if you're not good, what am I? There's a rule-of-three sum for you to do! But it's no use talking; I am not good, and I never shall be now. Perhaps I might be a heroine still, but I shall never be a good woman, I know."

"Do you think it easier to be a heroine?"

"Yes, as far as one knows of heroines from history. I'm capable of a great jerk, an effort, and then a relaxation—but steady every-day goodness is beyond me. I must be a moral kangaroo!"

Molly could not follow Cynthia's ideas; she could not distract herself from the thoughts of the sorrowing group at the Hall.

"How I should like to see them all! and yet one can do nothing at such a time! Papa says the funeral is to be on Tuesday, and that, after that, Roger Hamley is to go back to Cambridge. It will seem as if nothing had happened! I wonder how the squire and Mr. Osborne Hamley will get on together."

"He's the eldest son, is he not? Why shouldn't he and his father get on well together?"

"Oh! I don't know. That is to say, I do know, but I think I ought not to tell."

"Don't be so pedantically truthful, Molly. Besides, your manner shows when you speak truth and when you speak falsehood, without troubling yourself to use words. I knew exactly what your 'I don't

know' meant. I never consider myself bound to be truthful, so I beg we may be on equal terms."

Cynthia might well say she did not consider herself bound to be truthful; she literally said what came uppermost, without caring very much whether it was accurate or not. But there was no ill-nature, and, in a general way, no attempt at procuring any advantage for herself in all her deviations; and there was often such a latent sense of fun in them that Molly could not help being amused with them in fact, though she condemned them in theory. Cynthia's playfulness of manner glossed such failings over with a kind of charm; and yet, at times, she was so soft and sympathetic that Molly could not resist her, even when she affirmed the most startling things. The little account she made of her own beauty pleased Mr. Gibson extremely; and her pretty deference to him won his heart. She was restless too, till she had attacked Molly's dress, after she had remodelled her mother's.

"Now for you, sweet one," said she as she began upon one of Molly's gowns. "I've been working as connoisseur until now. Now I begin as amateur."

She brought down her pretty artificial flowers, plucked out of her own best bonnet to put into Molly's, saying they would suit her complexion, and that a knot of ribbons would do well enough for her. All the time she worked, she sang; she had a sweet voice in singing, as well as in speaking, and used to run up and down her gay French chansons without any difficulty; so flexible in the art was she. Yet she did not seem to care for music. She rarely touched the piano on which Molly practised with daily conscientiousness. Cynthia was always willing to answer questions about her previous life, though, after the first, she rarely alluded to it of herself; but she was a most sympathetic listener to all Molly's innocent confidences of joys and sorrows; sympathizing even to the extent of wondering how she could endure Mr. Gibson's second marriage, and why she did not take some active steps of rebellion.

In spite of all this agreeable and pungent variety of companionship at home, Molly yearned after the Hamleys. If there had been a woman in that family she would probably have received many little notes, and heard of numerous details which were now lost to her, or summed up in condensed accounts of her father's visits at the Hall, which, since his dear patient was dead, were only occasional.

"Yes! The squire is a good deal changed; but he's better than he was. There's an unspoken estrangement between him and Osborne; one can see it in the silence and constraint of their manners; but outwardly they are friendly—civil at any rate. The squire will always respect Osborne as his heir, and the future representative of the family. Osborne doesn't look well; he says he wants change. I think he's weary of the domestic tête-à-tête, or domestic dimension. But he feels his mother's death acutely. It's a wonder that he and his father are not drawn together by their common loss. Roger's away at Cambridge too—

examination for the mathematical tripos. Altogether the aspect of both people and place is changed ; it is but natural ! ”

Such is perhaps the summing-up of the news of the Hamleys, as contained in many bulletins. They always ended in some kind message to Molly.

Mrs. Gibson generally said, as a comment upon her husband’s account of Osborne’s melancholy,—

“ My dear ! why don’t you ask him to dinner here ? A little quiet dinner, you know. Cook is quite up to it ; and we would all of us wear blacks and lilacs ; he couldn’t consider that as gaiety.”

Mr. Gibson took no more notice of these suggestions than by shaking his head. He had grown accustomed to his wife by this time, and regarded silence on his own part as a great preservative against long inconsequential arguments. But every time that Mrs. Gibson was struck by Cynthia’s beauty, she thought it more and more advisable that Mr. Osborne Hamley should be cheered up by a quiet little dinner-party. As yet no one but the ladies of Hollingsford and Mr. Ashton, the vicar—that hopeless and impracticable old bachelor—had seen Cynthia ; and what was the good of having a lovely daughter, if there were none but old women to admire her ?

Cynthia herself appeared extremely indifferent upon the subject, and took very little notice of her mother’s constant talk about the gaieties that were possible, and the gaieties that were impossible, in Hollingsford. She exerted herself just as much to charm the two Miss Brownings as she would have done to delight Osborne Hamley, or any other young heir. That is to say, she used no exertion, but simply followed her own nature, which was to attract every one of those she was thrown amongst. The exertion seemed rather to be to refrain from doing so, and to protest, as she so often did, by slight words and expressive looks against her mother’s words and humours—alike against her folly and her caresses. Molly was almost sorry for Mrs. Gibson, who seemed so unable to gain influence over her child. One day Cynthia read Molly’s thought.

“ I am not good, and I told you so. Somehow I cannot forgive her for her neglect of me as a child, when I would have clung to her. Besides, I hardly ever heard from her when I was at school. And I know she put a stop to my coming over to her wedding. I saw the letter she wrote to Madame Fléchier. A child should be brought up with its parents, if it is to think them infallible when it grows up.”

“ But though it may know that there must be faults,” replied Molly, “ it ought to cover them over and try to forget their existence.”

“ It ought. But don’t you see I have grown up outside the pale of duty and ‘oughts.’ Love me as I am, sweet one, for I shall never be better.” *

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. GIBSON'S VISITORS.

ONE day, to Molly's infinite surprise, Mr. Preston was announced as a caller. Mrs. Gibson and she were sitting together in the drawing-room; Cynthia was out—gone into the town a-shopping—when the door was opened, the name given, and in walked the young man. His entrance seemed to cause more confusion than Molly could well account for. He came in with the same air of easy assurance with which he had received them at Ashcombe Manor-house. He looked remarkably handsome in his riding-dress, and with the open-air exercise he had just had. But Mrs. Gibson's smooth brows contracted a little at the sight of him, and her reception of him was much cooler than that which she usually gave to visitors. Yet there was a degree of agitation in it, which surprised Molly a little. Mrs. Gibson was at her everlasting worsted-work frame when Mr. Preston entered the room; but somehow in rising to receive him, she threw down her basket of crewels, and, declining Molly's offer to help her, she would pick up all the reels herself, before she asked her visitor to sit down. He stood there, hat in hand, affecting an interest in the recovery of the worsted which Molly was sure he did not feel; for all the time his eyes were glancing round the room, and taking note of the details in the arrangement.

At length they were seated, and conversation began.

"It is the first time I have been in Hollingsford since your marriage, Mrs. Gibson, or I should certainly have called to pay my respects sooner."

"I know you are very busy at Ashcombe. I did not expect you to call. Is Lord Cumnor at the Towers? I have not heard from her ladyship for more than a week!"

"No! he seemed still detained at Bath. But I had a letter from him giving me certain messages for Mr. Sheepshanks. Mr. Gibson is not at home, I'm afraid?"

"No. He is a great deal out—almost constantly, I may say. I had no idea that I should see so little of him. A doctor's wife leads a very solitary life, Mr. Preston!"

"You can hardly call it solitary, I should think, when you have such a companion as Miss Gibson always at hand," said he, bowing to Molly.

"Oh, but I call it solitude for a wife when her husband is away. Poor Mr. Fitzpatrick was never happy unless I always went with him;—all his walks, all his visits, he liked me to be with him. But somehow Mr. Gibson feels as if I should be rather in his way."

"I don't think you could ride pillion behind him on Black Bear, mamma," said Molly. "And unless you could go in that way you could hardly go with him in his rounds up and down all the rough lanes."

"Oh! but he might keep a brougham! I've often said so. And then I could use it for visiting in the evenings. Really it was one reason

why I didn't go to the Hollingford Charity Ball. I couldn't bring myself to use the dirty fly from the Angel. We really must stir papa up against next winter, Molly; it will never do for you and——"

She pulled herself up suddenly, and looked furtively at Mr. Preston to see if he had taken any notice of her abruptness. Of course he had, but he was not going to show it. He turned to Molly, and said,—

"Have you ever been to a public ball yet, Miss Gibson?"

"No!" said Molly.

"It will be a great pleasure to you when the time comes."

"I'm not sure. I shall like it if I have plenty of partners; but I'm afraid I shan't know many people."

"And you suppose that young men haven't their own ways and means of being introduced to pretty girls?"

It was exactly one of the speeches Molly had disliked him for before; and delivered, too, in that kind of underbred manner which showed that it was meant to convey a personal compliment. Molly took great credit to herself for the unconcerned manner with which she went on with her tattling exactly as if she had never heard it.

"I only hope I may be one of your partners at the first ball you go to. Pray, remember my early application for that honour, when you are overwhelmed with requests for dances."

"I don't choose to engage myself beforehand," said Molly, perceiving, from under her dropped eyelids, that he was leaning forward and looking at her as though he was determined to have an answer.

"Young ladies are always very cautious in fact, however modest they may be in profession," he replied, addressing himself in a nonchalant manner to Mrs. Gibson. "In spite of Miss Gibson's apprehension of not having many partners she declines the certainty of having one. I suppose Miss Fitzpatrick will have returned from France before then?"

He said these last words exactly in the same tone as he had used before; but Molly's instinct told her that he was making an effort to do so. She looked up. He was playing with his hat, almost as if he did not care to have any answer to his question. Yet he was listening acutely, and with a half smile on his face.

Mrs. Gibson reddened a little, and hesitated,—

"Yes; certainly. My daughter will be with us next winter, I believe; and I dare say she will go out with us."

"Why can't she say at once that Cynthia is here now?" asked Molly of herself, yet glad that Mr. Preston's curiosity was baffled.

He still smiled; but this time he looked up at Mrs. Gibson, as he asked,—"You have good news from her, I hope?"

"Yes; very. By the way, how are our old friends the Robinsons? How often I think of their kindness to me at Ashcombe! Dear good people, I wish I could see them again."

"I will certainly tell them of your kind inquiries. They are very well, I believe."

Just at this moment, Molly heard the familiar sound of the click and opening of the front door. She knew it must be Cynthia; and, conscious of some mysterious reason which made Mrs. Gibson wish to conceal her daughter's whereabouts from Mr. Preston, and maliciously desirous to baffle him, she rose to leave the room, and meet Cynthia on the stairs; but one of the lost crewels of worsted had entangled itself in her gown and feet, and before she had freed herself of her encumbrance, Cynthia had opened the drawing-room door, and stood in it, looking at her mother, at Molly, at Mr. Preston, but not advancing one step. Her colour, which had been brilliant the first moment of her entrance, faded away as she gazed; but her eyes—her beautiful eyes—usually so soft and grave, seemed to fill with fire, and her brows to contract, as she took the resolution to come forward and take her place among the three, who were all looking at her with different emotions. She moved calmly and slowly forwards; Mr. Preston went a step or two to meet her, his hand held out, and the whole expression of his face that of eager delight.

But she took no notice of the outstretched hand, nor of the chair that he offered her. She sat down on a little sofa in one of the windows, and called Molly to her.

"Look at my purchases," said she. "This green ribbon was fourteen-pence a yard, this silk three shillings," and so she went on, forcing herself to speak about these trifles as if they were all the world to her, and she had no attention to throw away on her mother and her mother's visitor.

Mr. Preston took his cue from her. He, too, talked of the news of the day, the local gossip—but Molly, who glanced up at him from time to time, was almost alarmed by the bad expression of suppressed anger, almost amounting to vindictiveness, which entirely marred his handsome looks. She did not wish to look again; and tried rather to back up Cynthia's efforts at maintaining a separate conversation. Yet she could not help overhearing Mrs. Gibson's strain after increased civility, as if to make up for Cynthia's rudeness, and, if possible, to deprecate his anger. She talked perpetually, as though her object were to detain him; whereas previous to Cynthia's return she had allowed frequent pauses in the conversation, as though to give him the opportunity to take his leave.

In the course of the conversation between them the Hamleys came up. Mrs. Gibson was never unwilling to dwell upon Molly's intimacy with this county family; and when the latter caught the sound of her own name, her stepmother was saying,—

"Poor Mrs. Hamley could hardly do without Molly; she quite looked upon her as a daughter, especially towards the last, when, I am afraid, she had a good deal of anxiety. Mr. Osborne Hamley—I dare say you have heard—he did not do so well at college, and they had expected so much—parents will, you know; but what did it signify? for he had not to earn his living! I call it a very foolish kind of ambition when a young man has not to go into a profession."

"Well, at any rate, the squire must be satisfied now. I saw this

morning's *Times*, with the Cambridge examination lists in it. Isn't the second son called after his father, Roger?"

"Yes," said Molly, starting up, and coming nearer.

"He's senior wrangler, that's all," said Mr. Preston, almost as though he were vexed with himself for having anything to say that could give her pleasure. Molly went back to her seat by Cynthia.

"Poor Mrs. Hamley," said she very softly, as if to herself. Cynthia took her hand, in sympathy with Molly's sad and tender look, rather than because she understood all that was passing in her mind, nor did she quite understand it herself. A death that had come out of time; a wonder if the dead knew what passed upon the earth they had left—the brilliant Osborne's failure, Roger's success; the vanity of human wishes, all these thoughts, and what they suggested, were inextricably mingled up in her mind. She came to herself in a few minutes. Mr. Preston was saying all the unpleasant things he could think of about the Hamleys in a tone of false sympathy.

"The poor old squire—not the wisest of men—has woefully mismanaged his estate. And Osborne Hamley is too fine a gentleman to understand the means by which to improve the value of the land—even if he had the capital. A man who had practical knowledge of agriculture, and some thousands of ready money, might bring the rental up to eight thousand or so. Of course, Osborne will try and marry some one with money; the family is old and well-established, and he mustn't object to commercial descent, though I daresay the squire will for him; but then the young fellow himself is not the man for the work. No! the family's going down fast; and it's a pity when these old Saxon houses vanish off the land; but it is 'kismet' with the Hamleys. Even the senior wrangler—if it is that Roger Hamley—he will have spent all his brains in one effort. You never hear of a senior wrangler being worth anything afterwards. He'll be a Fellow of his college, of course—that will be a livelihood for him at any rate."

"I believe in senior wranglers," said Cynthia, her clear high voice ringing through the room. "And from all I've ever heard of Mr. Roger Hamley, I believe he will keep up the distinction he has earned. And I don't believe that the house of Hamley is so near extinction in wealth and name, and good name."

"They are fortunate in having Miss Kirkpatrick's good word," said Mr. Preston, rising to take his leave.

"Dear Molly," said Cynthia, in a whisper, "I know nothing about your friends the Hamleys, except that they are your friends, and what you have told me about them. But I won't have that man speaking of them so—and your eyes filling with tears all the time. I'd sooner swear to their having all the talents and good fortune under the sun."

The only person of whom Cynthia appeared to be wholesomely afraid was Mr. Gibson. When he was present she was more careful in speaking, and showed more deference to her mother. Her evident respect for

Mr. Gibson, and desire for his good opinion, made her curb herself before him ; and in this manner she earned his good favour as a lively, sensible girl, with just so much knowledge of the world as made her a very desirable companion to Molly. Indeed, she made something of the same kind of impression on all men. They were first struck with her personal appearance ; and then with her pretty deprecating manner, which appealed to them much as if she had said, “ You are wise, and I am foolish—have mercy on my folly.” It was a way she had ; it meant nothing really ; and she was hardly conscious of it herself ; but it was very captivating all the same. Even old Williams, the gardener, felt it ; he said to his confidante, Molly—

“ Eh, miss, but that be a rare young lady ! She do have such pretty coaxing ways. I be to teach her to bud roses come the season—and I'll warrant ye she'll learn to be sharp enough, for all she says she bees so stupid.”

If Molly had not had the sweetest disposition in the world she might have become jealous of all the allegiance laid at Cynthia's feet ; but she never thought of comparing the amount of admiration and love which they each received. Yet once she did feel a little as if Cynthia were poaching on her manor. The invitation to the quiet dinner had been sent to Osborne Hamley, and declined by him. But he thought it right to call soon afterwards. It was the first time Molly had seen any of the family since she left the Hall, since Mrs. Hamley's death ; and there was so much that she wanted to ask. She tried to wait patiently till Mrs. Gibson had exhausted the first gush of her infinite nothings ; and then Molly came in with her modest questions. How was the squire ? Had he returned to his old habits ? Had his health suffered ?—putting each inquiry with as light and delicate a touch as if she had been dressing a wound. She hesitated a little, a very little, before speaking of Roger ; for just one moment the thought flitted across her mind that Osborne might feel the contrast between his own and his brother's college career too painfully to like to have it referred to ; but then she remembered the generous brotherly love that had always existed between the two, and had just entered upon the subject, when Cynthia, in obedience to her mother's summons, came into the room, and took up her work. No one could have been quieter—she hardly uttered a word ; but Osborne seemed to fall under her power at once. He no longer gave his undivided attention to Molly. He cut short his answers to her questions ; and by and by, without Molly's rightly understanding how it was, he had turned towards Cynthia, and was addressing himself to her. Molly saw the look of content on Mrs. Gibson's face ; perhaps it was her own mortification at not having heard all she wished to know about Roger, that gave her a keener insight than usual, but certain it is that all at once she perceived that Mrs. Gibson would not dislike a marriage between Osborne and Cynthia, and considered the present occasion as an auspicious beginning. Remembering the secret which she had been let into so unwillingly,

Molly watched his behaviour, almost as if she had been retained in the interests of the absent wife ; but, after all, thinking as much of the possibility of his attracting Cynthia as of the unknown and mysterious Mrs. Osborne Hamley. His manner was expressive of great interest and of strong prepossession in favour of the beautiful girl to whom he was talking. He was in deep mourning, which showed off his slight figure and delicate refined face. But there was nothing of flirting, as far as Molly understood the meaning of the word, in either looks or words. Cynthia, too, was extremely quiet ; she was always much quieter with men than with women ; it was part of the charm of her soft allurement that she was so passive. They were talking of France. Mrs. Gibson herself had passed two or three years of her girlhood there ; and Cynthia's late return from Boulogne made it a very natural subject of conversation. But Molly was thrown out of it ; and with her heart still unsatisfied as to the details of Roger's success, she had to stand up at last, and receive Osborne's good-by, scarcely longer or more intimate than his farewell to Cynthia. As soon as he was gone Mrs. Gibson began in his praise.

" Well, really, I begin to have some faith in long descent. What a gentleman he is ! How agreeable and polite ! So different from that forward Mr. Preston," she continued, looking a little anxiously at Cynthia. Cynthia, quite aware that her reply was being watched for, said, coolly,—

" Mr. Preston doesn't improve on acquaintance. There was a time, mamma, when I think both you and I thought him very agreeable."

" I don't remember. You've a clearer memory than I have. But we were talking of this delightful Mr. Osborne Hamley. Why, Molly, you were always talking of his brother—it was Roger this, and Roger that—I can't think how it was you so seldom mentioned this young man."

" I did not know I had mentioned Mr. Roger Hamley so often," said Molly, blushing a little. " But I saw much more of him—he was more at home."

" Well, well ! It's all right, my dear. I daresay he suits you best. But really, when I saw Osborne Hamley close to my Cynthia, I couldn't help thinking—but perhaps I'd better not tell you what I was thinking of. Only they are each of them so much above the average in appearance ; and, of course, that suggests things."

" I perfectly understand what you were thinking of, mamma," said Cynthia, with the greatest composure ; " and so does Molly, I have no doubt."

" Well ! there's no harm in it, I'm sure. Did you hear him say that, though he did not like to leave his father alone just at present, yet that when his brother Roger came back from Cambridge, he should feel more at liberty ? It was quite as much as to say, ' If you will ask me to dinner then, I shall be delighted to come.' And chickens will be so much cheaper, and cook has such a nice way of boning them, and doing them up

with forcemeat. Everything seems to be falling out so fortunately. And Molly, my dear, you know I won't forget you. By and by, when Roger Hamley has taken his turn at stopping at home with his father, we will ask him to one of our little quiet dinners."

Molly was very slow at taking this in; but in about a minute the sense of it had reached her brain, and she went all over very red and hot; especially as she saw that Cynthia was watching the light come into her mind with great amusement.

"I'm afraid Molly isn't properly grateful, mamma. If I were you, I wouldn't exert myself to give a dinner-party on her account. Bestow all your kindness upon me."

Molly was often puzzled by Cynthia's speeches to her mother; and this was one of these occasions. But she was more anxious to say something for herself; she was so much annoyed at the implication in Mrs. Gibson's last words.

"Mr. Roger Hamley has been very good to me; he was a great deal at home when I was there, and Mr. Osborne Hamley was very little there: that was the reason I spoke so much more of one than the other. If I had—if he had,"—losing her coherence in the difficulty of finding words,— "I don't think I should. Oh, Cynthia, instead of laughing at me, I think you might help me to explain myself!"

Instead, Cynthia gave a diversion to the conversation.

"Mamma's paragon gives me an idea of weakness. I can't quite make out whether it is in body or mind. Which is it, Molly?"

"He is not strong, I know; but he is very accomplished and clever. Every one says that,—even papa, who doesn't generally praise young men. That made the puzzle the greater when he did so badly at college."

"Then it's his character that is weak. I'm sure there's weakness somewhere; but he's very agreeable. It must have been very pleasant, staying at the Hall."

"Yes; but it's all over now."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mrs. Gibson, wakening up from counting the stitches in her pattern. "We shall have the young men coming to dinner pretty often, you'll see. Your father likes them, and I shall always make a point of welcoming his friends. They can't go on mourning for a mother for ever. I expect we shall see a great deal of them; and that the two families will become very intimate. After all, these good Hollingford people are terribly behindhand, and I should say, rather commonplace."

University Life

A HUNDRED novels have been written on University life, but we have never met with anything which conveyed to the uninitiated an accurate picture of the ordinary existence of an undergraduate ; and this is what we now propose to lay before our readers. It is of Oxford that we especially intend to treat ; but her laws and customs are so similar to those of Cambridge that a knowledge of one is a knowledge of both. To begin, then, *ab initio*, we will state, for the benefit of any parent who desires to send his boy to Oxford, that it is necessary for him to write to the head of the college he selects, and request that the boy's name may be placed on the book of candidates. In the case of popular colleges, as in that of popular clubs, it is requisite that the application should be made several years before. At Cambridge, candidates can be entered on a very brief notice, because freshmen are not required to sleep in college, but are accommodated at the licensed University lodging-houses ; while at Oxford, every undergraduate must sleep in college during a fixed number of terms. When the period of matriculation arrives, the candidate receives due notice from the head of his college of the day and hour fixed for examination, and is expected to make his appearance at the college hall. The examination varies very much in its extent and severity. The requirements are much the highest at Balliol. Many colleges, although they would probably be unwilling to admit the fact, vary their standard according to their members ; rejecting, when they are full, those whom they would pass if the members on the books were low. After the examination has been duly passed, the men are conducted by a college tutor to the Vice-Chancellor, where they have the satisfaction of paying certain fees, varying according to their respective rank, to that functionary's butler ; and are afterwards presented with a strip of paper, in the following form :—

TERM.

OXONIE.

ANNO DOMINI.

Quo die comparuit coram me John Smith, & Coll. fil. et
subscriptis articulis fidei et religionis; et juramentum suscepit de agnoscendâ supremâ
Regie Majestatis potestate ; et admonitus est de observandis statutis hujus Univer-
sitatis :

This the candidate gets together with a book containing the said statutes, bound in calf if the candidate be a nobleman or gentleman commoner, in leather if he be of less degree.

An undergraduate does not usually reside the term of his matriculation, but makes his reappearance after the next vacation. On his arrival, he

announces his name to the porter, who conducts him to his rooms, and introduces him to that most important element in his comfort, or the reverse of it, his "scout,"—whose services he shares in common with some six or seven other masters.

The appearance of college rooms on induction is somewhat depressing, their only cheerful element being the fire. The furniture is dingy, greasy, and stinks of smoke; the springs of the easy-chair conduce to quite the reverse of luxury; and there is a dreary look about the whole place. The desolation of the centre-table is only relieved by a number of bilious documents, whose contents are, however, at this early period of your career, of a less trying nature than they will be two years hence, as they are merely to call your attention to the singular advantages enjoyed by the customers of Messrs. &c. &c. &c. Your scout soon brings you an alarming list of articles which he assures you are indispensable, and presently adds that he happens to have several of these in stock, second-hand, which he could be induced to part with for a modest consideration. You thereupon become the privileged possessor of a battered coal-scuttle and other treasures, which having probably been purchased by at least ten men in turn, have realized a comfortable sum to their vendor. A man generally changes his rooms for the better after his second or third term—at least, he has the chance of doing so if he pleases; the rental of the rooms varies from 12*l.* to 20*l.* a year. The bedrooms are usually very small, little more than closets in fact, and open upon the sitting-room; a closet, or "scout's-hole," as it is usually called, completes the set of rooms. The sitting-room is provided with two doors, and when the outer one is shut, it is termed "sporting the oak."

College rooms, when they have been occupied for a few weeks, generally assume a comfortable appearance, and are sometimes furnished with considerable elegance and luxury. Indeed, some men particularly *pique themselves* on the taste they display in the pictures, furnishing, and decorations of their rooms.

The arrangement as to the furniture is, that each incoming tenant buys that of the outgoing at a valuation. The incoming tenant can object to articles, and the appraiser must then take them off his hands.

Expenses at Oxford depend mainly upon the personal habits of a man: the actual necessary cost of an university education need not exceed 130*l.* a year; but we must at the same time candidly avow that we should never recommend a young man to go to the university with less than 200*l.* a year. If he has less than this, he cannot, without incurring debts, enter into society on anything like equal terms with his companions, and he is in a great degree debarred from participating in their sports, pleasures, and amusements: he thus loses, in a great measure, what we hold to be advantages little less essential than classics and mathematics. "Ah," said Sydney Smith, when they were establishing the London University, "you may call it an university, it will only be a grammar-shop." By which, we take it, he meant that the London University, though an

admirable institution in its way, would afford none of that physical and social training so peculiarly the property of its two elder sisters.

Those who propose to send a son to Oxford on a very small allowance, should bear in mind that in so doing they are placing him in a position in which he requires a world of prudence and self-denial to keep out of debt and danger, and this, too, between the age of eighteen and twenty-two. A youth of the same age living on a small salary as a clerk in London, has a far less difficult part to play ; he can live one day on eighteen-pence to spend half-a-crown on another, and is neither exposed to the prying eyes and invidious comparisons of bed-makers and scouts, nor to dangerous temptations to hospitality.

The first days of a freshman are not particularly lively. It of course makes much difference to a man if he comes from a great public school, and finds plenty of old schoolfellows ; but even then they have got their own friends and set, and the freshman requires a few weeks to shake off his sense of isolation, and choose his acquaintance. The day after his arrival he has an interview with his tutor, who talks about his reading, puts him into some lectures, and gives him a little general advice, which he probably does not adopt. After that, the regular routine life begins. An university day is pretty much as follows :—There is service in chapel at eight ; at nine or ten lectures begin ; these are over at one, and the afternoon is free ; then, at four or five, there is chapel again ; and after that dinner. Some colleges are much more stringent than others, as regards attendance at chapel. Attendance at morning chapel counts for more than in the evening ; and three mornings a week and twice on Sunday would generally suffice. More attendance would be required in the evening, and all colleges are particular about Sunday ; but an attendance at some other place of worship, such as Magdalen or New College, where a choral service is performed, which many undergraduates prefer attending, would be usually accepted by the dean in lieu of attendance at the college chapel. The names of those who attend chapel are pricked off by the Bible clerks, and the list sent up to the dean.

The chapel service does not usually include a sermon, but members of the university can, if they please, attend the university church, at St. Mary's, where a sermon is preached twice every Sunday, and once on saints' days. The number of the congregation entirely depends upon the eminence or popularity of the preacher. The galleries are crowded when such shining lights as Wilberforce, Pusey, Stanley, or Thompson, are to be heard. The heads of houses and university officers attend in their robes, and form a stately procession to and from the church. The Vice-Chancellor is escorted by his mace-bearers, familiarly called "pokers," to and from his residence.

It happened when a head of a house not remarkable for gigantic stature filled the office of Vice-Chancellor, that he at length observed that, whenever in his state progress to and from St. Mary's he had occasion to pass certain rooms occupied by an undergraduate, by a remarkable coin-

cidence the strains of " See the Conquering Hero comes " burst from these apartments. Indeed, the regular repetition of this melody at such times provoked so much notice that the talented performer was requested to carry his musical genius to a more favourable sphere for a term or two.

Breakfast, the second event in the day's programme, follows immediately after chapel. This, and all meals except dinner, are served separately to every man in his own rooms. There he can invite what friends he pleases. It is a very common plan for two or more men to "commonize," i.e. mess together at breakfast; each man having his "commons," bread and butter from the buttery put into a common stock. This is a cheap and convenient way of avoiding solitary meals. A regular breakfast, when a man entertains his friends, is a very substantial affair: composed of all sorts of viands, from heavy dishes of fish and roast turkeys to omelettes and jams; in fact, an entertainment which most of us, in our more mature years, would think it prudent to avoid at so early an hour of the twenty-four. At most colleges if a *hot* breakfast be desired, and this is quite *de rigueur*—leave must be obtained of the dean, who seldom refuses, unless he thinks the host is extending his hospitalities beyond his means. In some colleges these breakfasts are not supplied by the college, and must be obtained from a confectioner's, which raises the price, and adds to those "ticks" which, we know, sometimes trail heavily on slender pockets for many a year to come. If given by a man who understands "doing the thing well," and the guests know each other, and are not obliged to rush off to lectures the instant they have done eating, a breakfast is pleasant enough; but in Oxford, as in London, some men's parties are always agreeable, and others the reverse. The average cost of a breakfast is about five shillings a head.

About your second year, certain ominous tappings at the door not unfrequently interrupt the enjoyment of breakfast. These arise from the emissaries of shops in "the High," bearing missives duly enveloped and addressed — —, Esq.—(the Oxford tradesmen never seem to recognize the fact of your being the owner of a Christian name)—and containing "a little bill." These unwelcome visitors generally have the propriety to retire when the object of their solicitation is surrounded by his friends, but sometimes they are desperate and hold their ground. "Come in!" roared Mr. L. of Ch. Ch. (whose "little bills" amounted in the aggregate to a few thousands of pounds), in answer to a respectful tap. Whereupon a head was thrust in, and, nescire daunted by the sight of some twenty men discussing a sumptuous breakfast, proclaimed in audible and reproachful tones, "I come, sir, from Mr. Richards." "Then confound you, you may go back to Mr. Richards!" exclaimed the host, discharging at the same time a heavy missile which the intruder narrowly escaped. We believe that in this case the man's pertinacity was not rewarded, and that his bill was, in common with many others, never paid. This seldom occurs to Oxford creditors; though they often have to wait years for their money, they rarely lose it in the long run. There are at this moment

hundreds of curates sprinkled over England paying out of their wretched stipends heavy instalments to Oxford.

From breakfast we will take the reader to "lecture." At "lecture" about twenty men assemble around a long table, in the lecture-room : generally a large, massively furnished apartment. These gentlemen are supposed to have got up a certain amount of some classical author, and to be prepared to construe and parse it. The tutor says, "Mr. ——, will you have the goodness to go on." If the man addressed knows anything about the subject, he complies ; if not, he announces that "he hasn't read it," and somebody else is called upon. It sometimes happens that a man, on so many occasions, "hasn't read it," that, after several reproofs, he is requested to confine himself to college after a specified hour, which is familiarly termed being "gated," or to furnish the tutor with the lecture translated into English : a task probably performed with a "crib" by the stationer's employé, at so much a page.

Even lectures are sometimes amusing. We recollect at a Horace lecture hearing a man gravely reply, on being requested to scan a line of Horace, "I don't scan, sir ; I never had any ear for music." An explanation which elicited a roar of laughter from the rest, and the direst indignation from a very original old Don. A lecture lasts an hour ; a man would not usually be put on more than twelve or fourteen lectures a week, and very often has many less ; a freshman has most. Of course most men occasionally "cut" a lecture, and many men cut at least half of those which they are told to attend. A very common method of escaping the tedium of this duty, when cutting it might involve somewhat serious consequences, is "to send in an *séger* ;" in other words, to improvise an attack of illness. It sometimes happens that the invalid is met later in the day—then engaged in athletic exercises, and apparently in the enjoyment of the rudest health—by the Don whose lecture he has so unfortunately been unable to attend : an inconsistency of conduct which occasionally meets with punishment. "When," said a good-humoured Don in our day, "a gentleman tells me that he is prevented by a headache from attending my lecture, and I meet him out for a walk, I think it may do him good ; but when I find him three hours after rowing furiously down the river, it does appear a rather singularly rapid recovery." Perhaps Archbishop Whately would have taken a more lenient view, since his remedy for a headache was to saw down trees.

Luncheon is generally a light repast at Oxford, the dinner hour being early, except in the aristocratic region of All Souls (where, according to the man who shows the common room, "the fellows dine every evening at eight o'clock off a turkey carpet and mydeerer"), and immediately after every one is off to his amusements. Some ride—but this is expensive : a hack costing 8s. for the afternoon, and something to the groom besides—some play rackets, tennis, or fives. Then there are boating, cricketing, gymnastics, fencing, billiard-playing ; pleasures

which all have numerous votaries. On a fine day the river is alive with boats, and many men row down to Iffley and then go through their gymnastics. In Christ Church meadows, close to the barges, there are to be found in the afternoon two or three persons of highly unprepossessing appearance, with small cages and some sharp-looking terriers: these cages contain rats, and on a moderate payment, a rat-hunt at once takes place for the gratification of any one who desires to participate in that exciting pastime. There are two or three packs of hounds, whose meets are within easy reach of Oxford, and a good many undergraduates help to swell the field; the authorities, wisely enough, seldom interfere with men for hunting, if they feel sure that it can be well afforded. Any undergraduate may go out for a ride without asking permission, but if a man wishes to drive he must ask leave of a tutor.

A common afternoon resource, especially on a wet day, is to attend the auctions which are frequently held in the High Street. The articles for sale consist chiefly of the effects of undergraduates who are either "going out of rooms," which means, going out of college into lodgings; their terms in college having expired, or "going down"—*i. e.* leaving Oxford—or who are suffering "from temporary embarrassment," causing a complete cessation of cash payments. In fact, these young gentlemen sometimes at a financial crisis are wont to send to a sale on Wednesday articles purchased new "on tick" the previous Monday, and an emissary of the tradesman from whom the article was originally bought sometimes attends to buy it in. Engravings from Landseer's and Ansdell's pictures of "Dignity and Impudence," "High Life and Low Life," &c., are prominent features at these sales, and the "Wounded (pronounced always by the auctioneer as spelt) Hound," and a "Portrait of Lord Byron," used a few years ago to be standing dishes. It is alleged that the auctioneer was heard to advertise a celebrated print bearing beneath it the words, "Ecce Homo," as a "Portrait of Eddy 'Omo, a foreign gentleman!"—but perhaps this was an ingenious invention. Having disposed of the afternoon, we will now pass on to dinner, which takes place between five and six. Men are not compelled to dine in hall, but in most colleges they must pay for their dinner two or three times a week whether they dine or not. The dinner is everywhere of much the same style, but better served at some colleges than at others. At nearly every college an undergraduate may invite one or more guests, a privilege of which advantage is very frequently taken. The Dons sit at a high table placed on a dais at the upper end of the hall. After dinner they withdraw to "the common room," where they have their dessert and coffee.

The commissariat arrangements in college consist of a kitchen and buttery, where catesables are served out at fixed hours. There is a very absurd punishment termed "crossing a man at the buttery," which means that a \times is set against his name to prohibit the butler from serving him. The effect of this is merely to put his acquaintance, or very often those who are not his acquaintance, to the expense of feeding him, as what

he requires is procured in their names. There was a story of a man being crossed by a very innocent old Don, and the culprit (who experienced no sort of inconvenience from the supposed disability) neglecting for several days to beg that the cross might be removed. This, however, he at last took occasion to do, after having concluded a very substantial luncheon. The old Don no sooner heard the petition than, persuaded that the man must be starving, he rushed towards him, exclaiming, "Unfortunate young man! sit down here this instant—not a word, not a word" (as the unhappy undergraduate endeavoured to excuse himself from the cold mutton). "Eat, eat at once!"—and to eat he was compelled.

Some "Dons" are hospitably inclined to undergraduates, and entertain very agreeably. Of course there is at times a considerable degree of awe infused into these hospitalities. We think it was at the late Dr. Gaisford's that some shy youth, when the ladies rose, rushed to open the door, and, standing well behind it, did not discover it was the door of a cupboard until he heard himself summoned by the dean's awful voice, when the ladies had disappeared.

The late Dr. Bull, irreverently called "the stalled ox," was very hospitable to young men. He was wont to call special attention during Lent to the fact that he always cut off his side-dishes during that solemn season; but there was plenty to eat notwithstanding. There was a legend that, at a certain period of the evening, the old canon availed himself of the first pause to allude to a fire which broke out long ago in Christ Church, and in the extinction of which, according to his own account, he rendered the most signal service. This interesting narrative, eagerly anticipated by all the more youthful of his guests, was said invariably to commence with "Never shall I forget the horrors of that night." At last, on one occasion, some young fellow, whose love of fun got the better of his good breeding, had the hardihood to say, "How about that night, Dr. Bull?" The doctor told the story, but never repeated it afterwards.

After dinner come the "wines." Sometimes the guests are invited the day before; sometimes only at dinner, when a scout comes round, and says, "Mr. ——'s compliments, and will you wine with him, sir?" Large wine-parties were going out in our time, and the smaller are far preferable. We doubt whether life affords many happier hours than those college "wines," when five or six congenial companions gather round the fire in a snug room, in all the exuberance of youth and hope. When long years have passed grey-headed men recall with regret the memory of those hours, and feel the force of those pretty lines,—

When I remember all
The friends so linked together
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garland's dead,
And all but he departed.

When a wine breaks up, some men adjourn to their rooms to read, whilst others stroll into friends' rooms where tea is going on; a piano acts as a great attraction, and several are usually to be found in every college; indeed, an Oxford evening is delightful, when a man is not haunted by a conscience reproaching him for not reading.

The especial charm of University life is that congenial society is always at hand directly you want it, and you can seclude yourself whenever you can summon up sufficient strength of mind to do so.

The great bugbear and terror of undergraduate existence lies in that awful word "Examination." There are, it is true, little interludes of delight, consisting of the remainder of the term in which a triumph has been gained; but yet, for an honours man, there really seems no rest. The ordeals are undergone in rooms situated in a splendid quadrangle called "the schools;" the written work is done at small deal tables, each man having a separate table, and examiners are posted all about to prevent "cribbing" of any kind, which nevertheless does, we suspect, go on to a considerable extent in the "pass" schools. It is an awful affair for a culprit to be discovered. We well remember being startled by hearing the head-examiner on a certain afternoon announce, in a loud, clear tone, "Sir — — —, you will have the goodness to leave the schools." Happily, in this case, the suspicion eventually proved to have been unfounded. When the vivid voice comes on, each victim goes up to a table covered with green baize, where sit the two inquisitors; the trembling wretch is requested in bland tones to sit down, which he does, looking furtively round at his friends, who, with a mistaken kindness, if he is a nervous man, are assembled to see how he gets on. If a man is popular, or if he is in for honours, and great things are expected of him, large numbers are often present to hear him. This was the case when the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Lord Carnarvon were candidates for the class list.

Numerous stories are always afloat of wonderful blunders in divinity; some, of course, are inventions, and others facts, or founded on facts. Here are a couple of amusing specimens, which we credit with some foundation:—

Examiner—"What can you tell me about St. Paul?"

Undergraduate—"He was also called Saul, and was brought up at the foot of Gamaliel."

Examiner—"Yes, quite right. What do you know about Gamaliel?"

Undergraduate—"It is a mountain in Galilee."

The next, we believe, may be credited to Cambridge:—

Examiner—"Why did Moses leave Egypt?"

Undergraduate (with hesitation)—"Why, sir—hem—hem—"

Examiner—"Come, come, answer if you know."

Undergraduate—"Well, sir, I suppose that little affair with Potiphar's wife!"

For the following we do not attempt in any way to vouch, although we have heard its authenticity strenuously asserted :—

Examiner—"Why was John the Baptist beheaded?"

Undergraduate (falteringly)—"Because he *would* dance with Herodius's daughter." . . . :

If a man has done a bad paper, or has failed in his *vivæ voce*, he has what is called "a second paper," as a last chance. This very often pulls him through. In the afternoon of the day on which the *vivæ voce* examination is passed, the certificate of a pass, called a "testamur," is given out, and about five o'clock in the afternoon, when "the schools" are going on, you may see a cluster of men in the schools' "quad," waiting for the precious piece of paper for themselves or their friends, or to carry off their sympathy and condolence to those wretches who are disappointed. The delight occasioned by the receipt of one of these scraps is often beyond all bounds, especially if a man has failed before, or has entertained very slight hopes of "getting through." The sensation of having successfully passed a harassing examination is indeed one of the most agreeable of which we are conscious. "I feel," forcibly remarked a man who had just come out of the schools, "as though some one who had been sitting on me all day had just got off."

An important institution in Oxford is the Union Society, a club containing a number of rooms comfortably furnished, including a very fine hall, where the debates are held; an excellent library, writing, and newspaper-rooms. In fact, it only differs from a London club in not being open on Sundays, and providing no refreshment. Some time since, a proposal was made by a very energetic treasurer, that coffee and other "light refreshments" should be provided in the evening. This motion, however, met with a vigorous opposition, and was negatived after great excitement. Several pasquinades appeared on the subject: one which we remember ran,—

Coffee and conversation,
Oh, glorious bright idea!
Muffins and meditation,
Gossip and ginger-beer!
Then raise a statue to him
Who framed this glorious phrase;
Preserve him as we knew him,
A light for other days.

The debates take place once a week, and are generally well attended. Of course, as in the House of Commons, anything of a personal character is especially attractive. The executive of the Union consists of a president, secretary, and treasurer. The officers are selected from members who take part in the debates, and show an interest in the affairs of the society. A subscription of ten guineas, we believe, makes a life member.

The "presidents" of the Union for many years past have generally been men who have distinguished themselves in after-life ; and the office of president is held a decided "blue ribbon" in the university, ranking in its way with the captaincy of the University Eleven, and the strokeanship of the University Eight. There are many men in the House of Commons at this moment who would readily acknowledge the advantage they derived from taking part in the debates of the Union. Amongst young M.P.'s, Mr. Lygon and Mr. Butler Johnstone were frequent speakers in the Oxford Parliament. Debates on religious subjects are rigorously excluded, but we think that those questions which in some degree hinge upon them used to provoke the warmest discussion—next to topics relating to the management of the institution, which, of course, afforded a delightful opportunity for the exercise of personal invective. The proposal to open the rooms of the society on Sunday invariably gave rise to a warm debate, terminating, notwithstanding the example of the London Clubs and the Cambridge Union, in a decision against the opening. More recently, we have observed that the Established Church in Ireland has been warmly discussed, and, if we remember rightly, the decision was unfavourable to that institution.

We trust that we have now given our readers a pretty accurate notion of college life, and we can assure such of them as have not experienced it, that it is in most respects a very agreeable, though not always a very profitable, mode of passing three or four years.

Winter Shooting.

This day is the last of the shooting season; and to-morrow will consign to its case, till next August or September, many a double-barrel that has for the last two months been dealing destruction by flood and fell, in closely preserved "home covers," in outlying copses by the side of rushy brooks, and over the "dismal swamp." Not that all the use of the gun can be held to terminate with the first of February. Sportsmen continue to shoot snipe and wild-fowl wherever they can find them. Rabbits are shot as a work of necessity, if not of sport, the whole year round. The gamekeeper is engaged in thinning his stock of hares by picking off the old males throughout the spring. But people, except in good wild-fowl districts, give up the idea of "going out shooting" as a regular amusement, after the beginning of this month. As we ushered in the season with a dissertation on partridge shooting, the distinctive sport of its commencement, let us now, therefore, bow it out with a few remarks on such sport as brings it to its close.

Really good winter shooting at preserved game can only be had at a great outlay of both time and money. Pheasants, rabbits, and hares cannot take care of themselves as partridges can. The last-mentioned are more completely *serge nature*. And if a manor be swept nearly clear of them one season, they will always reappear there the next, if the ground is to their liking, and there are any preserves at all within a reasonable distance. But that is not the case with the first-mentioned species. Hares and rabbits, it is true, breed uncommonly fast, and a good head of both may be got up with astonishing rapidity, if a man goes to work to do it. But it is a business of itself. And the consequence is, that shooting of this description requires a degree of permanent attention, a regular staff of employés, and an organized system of defence against poachers and vermin, which places it beyond the reach of that particular class of sportsmen in whose interest we support the partridge.

As regards the trouble and expense of preserving pheasants, something will depend upon the ground you have to deal with: for instance, upon the nature of your covers, upon the number of foxes, and upon the remoteness or contiguity of large towns. If the covers consist principally of oak, the birds won't require so much feed: as pheasants are very fond of, and thrive famously upon acorns. But then, upon the other hand, the birds are much more easily seen at roost in these trees than in fir, and are consequently a much easier prey to the poacher. To baulk him, it is common for men to go round every evening at dusk, and tap the trunks of the trees, to put the pheasants off their seats—who seldom or

never reascend the same night. Yet see the various ills game is heir to ! A descent from the oak into the fern, or underwood, is a leap from the frying-pan into the fire: an escape from the poacher's barrel to fall into the fox's jaws. Who is to guard against this last danger ? The best plan, we believe, is for a man or two to be kept strolling up and down the cover sides ; sometimes, perhaps, blowing a horn, or making some such noise, till the hour of peril has gone by. Of course, if the covers happen to be situated very favourably at a very long distance from any rendezvous of poachers, the birds might be left upon their perches ; or, if they lie in a non-hunting country where foxes are scarce, you can leave them to repose upon the ground. In either case, the trouble and expense of preserving them is materially lightened. On the whole we suppose, and taking an average case, a gentleman who thoroughly understands his business might keep pheasants enough to ensure killing his five hundred a season, at an expense varying from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds a year. This estimate does not of course include rent of shooting, which would probably be a third as much more. He would require a head-keeper at a pound a week, and an under-keeper at twelve shillings a week. This would come to about eighty pounds. For occasional helpers and watchers we can hardly set down less than ten pounds more. This brings us, in round numbers, to ninety. The cost of seed depends, as we have said, upon the composition of the covers. Without the help of acorns, pheasants may be fed at a cost of about ten or twelve pounds. Barley—of course not the best quality—is the commonest food to throw down to them ; but pease, and even potatoes, are considered by many persons to do as well or better than corn : and they have, at all events, this advantage, that the small birds do not pick them up as they will any kind of grain. If pheasants are fed with the latter, a good deal of chaff, or chopped straw, should be mixed with it, as that causes them to be a longer time in feeding, and to stay more about the spot.

The vermin which pheasants have to fear do not differ materially from those which prey upon the partridge ; nor need we recapitulate here what has been already said on that subject. The poacher is the grand enemy with whom the pheasant-shooter has to deal. And the worst of it is that as pheasants can only be shot—cannot, that is, be netted like other game—the poacher must always come out for them with a gun in his hand. Many gentlemen forbid their keepers to take guns with them at night, in the hope—too often an idle one—that either poachers will be too generous to fire upon unarmed men, or the keepers too prudent to provoke an encounter against such overwhelming odds. A gang of eight or ten poachers, armed with guns, of course feel pretty secure against capture when they meet a party of keepers who carry nothing worse than sticks. But then it is the duty of the keepers, if they cannot take the men then and there, to come sufficiently close to them to be able to swear to their identity, and perhaps to track them to their retreat. It is in

resisting these attempts that fatal affrays take place, perhaps oftener than from any other cause. It is, however, with netters of game that keepers have the fairest fights, though then, generally, against numerical odds, and a very brutal style of combat. As the process of netting may possibly be little understood by thousands who read of it in the newspapers, a few words descriptive of what is really an exciting sport may not be amiss. Hares and rabbits come out of their covers at night to feed in the open fields, and stay on till three or four in the morning. The poacher, accordingly, selects one side of a cover; and as close as he can to the hedge, without entangling his net in it, pegs along the ground some thirty or forty yards of netting. The net stands off the ground about as high as a man's knee. It is stretched tight, and fastened securely at each end, and fixed by intermediate pegs at intervals of eight or ten yards. The netting is sufficiently loose to cause a rabbit running against it to become inextricably entangled; and all being prepared, the men hide themselves in the nearest ditch, and send round dogs, specially trained to the work, to beat the adjacent fields. If they are in luck, the rabbits soon come trooping in, and dash madly into the netting, whence they are at once extricated, to have their necks broken by the nearest watcher. Ten or a dozen couple of rabbits is considered a very good "set." In less than half-an-hour it is all over, the net taken up, and a move made somewhere else. These nets are very expensive articles, and a good dog is a treasure. To seize the one, and to shoot the other, is considered by keepers nearly as great a triumph as the capture of the men themselves. This kind of poaching can only be followed on a dark night; so that the West-country poacher, who professes that

It's his delight of a shiny night,

must have had nobler game in view than rabbits. Hares, which are easily netted at the gates through which they are in the habit of passing, may be taken, we suppose, when it is light; but we should have fancied that a dark night was better even for this work. However, as the practitioner aforesaid, whose ideas have been reduced to verse, offers to drink the health of

e'er a gentleman
As wants to buy a heer,

we may presume that his experience tended in the opposite direction. For getting pheasants off the roost, a moonlight night is of course indispensable.

Hares and rabbits do not require to be fed like pheasants, and the watching which does for the one will do equally for the other. They add nothing to the cost of preserving where pheasants are preserved, though they add enormously to the pleasure of shooting when the pheasants are being shot.

Our readers will hardly require to be told that to kill five hundred pheasants in the season admits of nothing like regular battue shooting, at which nearly four times that number have been ere now killed in a day.

But they will give a man ten or a dozen days of good sport, and, combined with running game, will afford as much shooting as a reasonable man can desire. A party of four guns, killing their thirty brace of pheasants, forty or fifty couple of rabbits, half as many hares, and two or three woodcocks, will have had more than fifty shots apiece. If they began at eleven and left off at four, deducting an hour for luncheon, they will have fired thirteen shots an hour, or more than one every five minutes; so that something very much less than this would be fairly entitled to be called an excellent day's sport. Twenty brace of pheasants, with hares and rabbits in proportion, is, considering the shortness of a winter's day, ample for any four men who do not differ as much from a true sportsman as a glutton differs from an epicure.

To one who cares for natural scenery, the best time of the year for cover shooting is November, when the foliage is thinned sufficiently to give you a fair chance at the pheasants, while the woods have not yet doffed their rich autumnal robes of gold, and purple, and crimson. A more utilitarian reason for the same preference exists likewise in the fact, that the weather in November is still tolerably warm, and that you are able to stand still without such a coldness arising upon the part of your toes and your fingers, that you seem to have lost all acquaintance with them. Moreover, in many parts of England, November is the best month for woodcocks. But if your only object is to make as good a bag as possible, it is better to wait till the leaves are quite off the trees; when the pheasants loom large and black between the bare poles athwart the dead December sky.

A certain knack is required in shooting pheasants, as in shooting everything else, which until a man has mastered, he will go on missing what seems to both himself and lookers-on the easiest shots imaginable. There ought certainly to be no difficulty in hitting a pheasant. He does not dodge and twist like a snipe or a woodcock. To shoot as one does at partridges in the open when our bird is fifty yards away, is folly in cover, and what none but a novice would think of. Pheasants do not rise in covies and bother us in that way. They make a great noise, no doubt, about launching themselves before the public; but that is just a bit of bounce which one soon gets used to, and which, after a time, ceases to impress one at all, except perhaps by lending additional gusto to the act of stopping them. We believe the chief reason why men miss a pheasant is, in the first place, that he flies a great deal quicker than he seems to fly; and, in the second place, that they do not always wait till he has done rising, which it is generally possible to do without letting him get out of shot, and then firing just as he steadies himself for a straight flight. To kill pheasants, or indeed any birds coming over your head, is an art by itself. If you wait till they are perpendicular, you must give the gun a little swing backwards as you pull; but it is better to breast them if you must shoot, for the shots are unlikely to enter the breast, and probably take fatal effect in the head, neck, or belly.

To shoot a cover properly, the men and beaters should all walk in a line, gunner and beater alternately. We are here, of course, speaking of covers where that is possible. Many are so thick that it is quite impossible to shoot inside them; and in that case the guns are stationed outside. But the other plan is ten times the more pleasant one, as it admits of a little sociability, seasoned with a few bets, and streaked with a vein of mild chaff. There is no trouble at all in *finding* pheasants and rabbits, if you know they are there. In the covers they must be, or else, the latter, at least, in the hedgerows. So you beat out the covers before lunch, and the hedges afterwards, unless upon a day especially set apart for the slaughter of pheasants in all the covers on the ground. A party of four or five intimate friends for a day of this kind is uncommonly jolly. By the time the winter shooting has arrived, men have had the first keen edge of their desire taken off; and, though they enjoy the sport as much as ever, they are not so nervously anxious about it as on the 1st of September. The consequence is that there is generally more *fun* going on with a party of this kind than in partridge shooting; also, it is not made quite so much a toil of. You start after a good—perhaps late—breakfast, and a lounge over the fire afterwards, discussing anything but the subject on hand, and giving no one to suppose, as you infallibly do in September, that in your opinion the world was created for the sake of shooting. There is no particular skill required in choosing your covers or beating your ground. The nearest is the best to begin with. Here you are at the side of a nice ash spinney, intersected with ditches, and sloping down to a bit of a brook in the middle. Will you go inside or out? Inside. Very well. Away goes the stump of your cigar. Your shot-pouch is hitched round a little; or, if you use a breech-loader, the belt receives a final tug. Here's the best place to get over. Now, then, are you all right? Very well. Let the dogs go; and the day has begun. The men knock at the stems of the ash-trees, and thrash the bushes with their sticks, and probe every tuft of grass with their nailed toes. The keeper roars venomously to some over-zealous spaniel; all together emit a mixture of sounds familiar enough to shooters, but wholly indescribable in words, which are considered calculated to invite, terrify, or deceive into showing themselves, the birds and beasts who lurk beneath the thick cover. Some unwary rabbit is usually the first victim. But that one shot is always the signal, somehow or other, for the commencement of a fusillade which is to last till sunset. Hares and rabbits cross and re-cross, are killed and missed by dozens, till at last you approach a rather thicker spot, or perhaps a corner of the plantation. Then, from under your feet, comes a sudden roar, as if a tiger had been sprung—so at least it seems to you. A cock pheasant, finding further progress impeded by the thorns, and uncomfortably pressed by men and dogs in his rear, has determined on a bold dash for it. The well-known whirr of his wings sets half-a-dozen more in motion. The pheasants are rising all round you. "Don't *leg 'em*," bellows some one. "Well missed," cries another. "Come on,

sir," says the keeper; "better have this bit out again—there's a lot gone back."

Perhaps, three or four times in the course of the day, the monotonous chant of the beaters will be varied by unearthly shrieks of excitement, out of which is gradually evolved the great fact of "cock—forward,"—the simple meaning being that a woodcock has been marked down in front of us. Not a man of the party but would cheerfully pay down a sovereign to bag him. Whereabouts was it, asks every man with a gun, of every man with a stick, in an under-tone, hoping that he himself may obtain some exclusive information. "Oh, he beant far off, sir!" is the usual answer on such occasions. "Just where us be now, a little bit further on, I thinks, sir." At that moment, very likely, the bird gets up half-a-dozen yards behind the whole party, dodges sharply between two trees, wheels out of the cover, and is brought down, a long shot, with a broken wing by one of the outsiders. Just'your luck, you think.

The best of luncheon on a winter day's shooting is, that you can eat and drink as much as you feel inclined to eat and drink, without either damaging yourself for the day's work, or spoiling your appetite for dinner. On a hot summer's day—and early September is summer—when you are fresh to the work, and the work itself is much harder, you cannot indulge at luncheon without considerable danger. The severe bodily labour which you then undergo weakens your digestive organs. And the inevitable result of indulging your thirst and hunger in the middle of the day is, that you unfit yourself for further walking in the first place, and for comfortable dining in the second. Now, on a winter day's shooting nothing of this kind is likely to occur. You are in good condition. The work is just hard enough to give you a healthy appetite, and not hard enough to make you jaded or feverish. Lunch, therefore, at such a time is a much more unexceptionable institution than it is on a sultry day in early autumn, when you are thoroughly fagged with four hours' hard plodding through heavy wet turnips under a broiling sun. We gave our readers in our last paper upon shooting our ideas of a September luncheon. What ought that meal to be in the middle of December? Why, simply, whatever you like—the best you can get. We object not to hot dishes at such a moment as this. But, after all, these involve elaborate preparations, which are scarcely perhaps worth the trouble. The chief desideratum, in our opinion, is some good sherry. This should be preceded by a fair allowance of tolerably strong beer—porter, by the by, is a good item in such refreshment—and for eatables nothing is better than cold pie, cold beef, and such like substantial viands. Perhaps, after all, the chief difference between the two sorts of luncheon is in quantity rather than quality. It is to be remembered, however, that extreme cold, as well as extreme heat, has a tendency to make liquor take effect. And as shooting in cover is rather more ticklish work than shooting in the open, you must be careful to avoid taking so much as to endanger the lives of your companions, either canine or human. The

former, however, are always recognized as the more precious of the two. To wound a favourite dog, not only inflicts a severe pang upon its owner, but may, perhaps, spoil your day's sport. Whereas, if a man, or, what is more likely, a little boy, gets peppered in his less vital parts, nobody but himself is a pin the worse for the accident—at all events, a human being is taught caution by getting a few shots into his skin, whereas a dog cannot be. Such, ladies, is the brutal style of talk with which your brothers and husbands habitually regale themselves "after lunch."

Rabbit shooting is a most important branch of winter shooting. It is quite sufficient diversion for a whole day, and affords a delightful change after a morning's work among the pheasants. Shooting rabbits in cover as they jump across a narrow ride, or dart between the thick bushes, requires, of course, much greater dexterity than shooting them out of a hedgerow. But this latter practice affords admirable sport. To enjoy it thoroughly there should be four guns: two on each side of the hedge—one to take the rabbit as he comes out, the other to wipe his colleague's eye, should that organ have been too much wetted to enable its possessor to see clearly. We have seen more fun over an hour or two's shooting of this kind than over any kind of shooting we are acquainted with. The worst of preserving rabbits in sufficient quantities is that the presence of them on a farm seems to put tenants into a greater rage than any other kind of game. No doubt they do a great deal of damage. But they can't do more than hares. We suspect that farmers regard a large head of rabbits as the mere wantonness of preserving. Hares and pheasants, they would tell you, are worth eating when you get them; but rabbits they call vermin. They can buy them, too, for sixpence apiece, and cheapness, we must suppose, breeds contempt.

Snipe and duck shooting are getting worse and worse every year in England. This falling-off is probably attributable to the extensive drainage which has been carried on all over the kingdom for the last few years, and bids fair to extinguish, within no long period, one of the prettiest of the sportsman's pleasures. There will always, we imagine, be certain districts which are not worth reclaiming, where birds of this species will continue to be found pretty plentifully. But in the cultivated parts of England the complaint is universal, that where, twenty years ago, you could get thirty or forty shots in a morning's walk, you now cannot count on half-a-dozen. The present writer has never seen either snipe or wild-fowl shooting in anything like perfection. But he can speak to the cheerful and invigorating character of a walk along the brook-side in the early days of a frost, when the ground is just covered with a thin coating of snow, and both snipe and duck have come up the running streams which remain as yet unfrozen, away from the ice-bound marshes. In walking a brook-side, the young sportsman should remember always, if he can, to beat down the wind, for snipe always fly against it; and by pursuing that course you are almost sure of getting cross-shots at them, in which position they are very much easier to kill. The best way of

shooting at a snipe is still a moot point among sportsmen. Some say, shoot directly, the moment you catch sight of the white under his wing—straight at *that*, and don't let him get away. Others recommend waiting till he has finished the gyrations with which he begins his flight, and to take him at thirty or even forty yards. A great deal depends upon every individual's style of shooting. If he is a very quick shot, perhaps the first-mentioned plan is the best. But we should be inclined, on the whole, to back the other in the long run, especially seeing that a very slight wound is sure to bring a snipe to the ground; and that if you shoot steadily after him as he goes away straight, with a large charge of very small shot, it is hard if one or two don't catch him.

But you have just come upon a sharp bend in the stream where the banks are rather steep, and two or three willows or thorn-bushes, hanging very thickly over the surface, hide a nice little pool from observation. What is this sudden splash, as if a cow were waltzing in the water? The quack, quack-quarck, in another quarter of a second, sends a thrill through your whole body. Ducks, by jingo, and well within shot, too! Two mallards and three ducks—now only take your time! Take your time, sir, I implore you. They rise straight up, and hang for a moment ere they go. Then's your chance. Take your first bird as he poises himself almost stationary in mid-air, and the second as he turns to make off. So shall you seldom fail of your double shot, and return covered with glory. How well I recollect my first duck! I was about seventeen, I believe, at the time. Ducks were scarce in our neighbourhood, and I lived very little at home. It was a very hard winter, and I was determined to have blood or perish in the snow. They got up, two of them, out of a large ditch, nearly full of half-frozen water, from under a great hawthorn-bush, on which the berries blushed through the snow like a bride's cheek through her lace. This simile, I confess, I thought of at a subsequent period. I banged rather recklessly at the nearest as soon as my gun was to my shoulder, and down she flopped dead into the water she had just risen from. I jumped in—I know that, nearly up to my middle, to make sure of my prize at once—and never shall I forget the triumph with which I walked home icicles, but still glowing, and banged down my treasure on the kitchen table. Well, we grow older and wiser. I've gone knee-deep into many follies since, but I don't think I should do *that* again.

Bohemians and Bohemianism.

THE experienced Magazine-reader knows perfectly well, when he sees the title of this paper, that I am not going to entertain him with a discourse on Huss and the Hussites ; on Elizabeth the Queen of Hearts (in whose service, by the way, an ancestor of my own trailed a pike) ; or on the city of Prague, and the great Panslavonic movement. He discerns at a glance that I am going to talk about that section of society—to speak Hibernicè—which lives out of society : the Bohemians, not of Bohemia, but of that world of which, first in French books, and afterwards in English books, we have lately heard so much. It may be as well, however, for the satisfaction of prudent and wary minds, if I begin by showing what my modest ambition in the matter is. There are many blackguards who are Bohemians, but it does not at all follow that every Bohemian is a blackguard. So far from wishing to encourage young fellows of the weaker sort in a Bohemianism of which their families entertain a natural dread, I make no pretension to deal with what they might probably think the most piquant side of the subject. Indeed, the Bohemian who lives out of the world only because he is not fit for it—who dignifies his *natural* exile from polite life with the name of Bohemianism—is not picturesque, and is not—at least not for the most part—the kind of man we are to hear of in this essay. By a Bohemian, for present purposes, is meant a gentleman who, being no worse born, or bred, or educated than other folks, *is* yet, through some strong peculiarity of temperament in the first instance, *acted on* by circumstances in the second, alienated from society in its established, conventional, and certainly very convenient sense.

It is a curious thought that such a class of men should exist, and should now be absolutely beginning (in Paris, at all events,) to have a special literature of their own. Curious that there should be men who never enter a drawing-room, or leave a card, or make a formal call, or go to church, or subscribe to anything, or attend funerals, or give anybody away in marriage, or are godfather to anybody's child, or are executors and trustees to anybody, or are consulted about anybody's education, or take the chair at public meetings, or are "generally respected" in any "neighbourhood" known to the grave and busy and polite world at large. It is to their complete alienation from all this that such men owe the appellation which assimilates their class to that of the gipsies. They may have turtle-soup in their kettles at lucky times. They may be better descended than the magistrate who eyes them askance across his park-paling. But gipsies they are in fact and law. When one of them runs off with a blooming heiress, like Johnny Faa in the Scotch ballad, isn't there a shrieking

from hall and bower? When one of them succeeds himself to a good estate, what gloomy prophecies run round the neighbourhood! How impossible it is for the graceless fellow even to look at a fine tree without being suspected of a wish to cut it down! "A Bohemian, sir"—people are beginning to say now, as our ancestors said a prodigal, a scapegrace, a ne'er-do-well, and so forth. The strong centralizing spirit of the age makes the fact that the man is out of the social centre, determine the nickname for him. He is not among us;—well, he is a gipsy *ipso facto*. And the outsider takes up with a certain relish, and even pride, the title; and revenges himself on the enemy as occasion offers. The frequent attacks on "respectability," which have marked our light literature for many years back, are so many testimonies to the intellectual vigour of Bohemianism; and the Bohemian of the student class has repeatedly fought at the barricades in the Continental revolutions of later years.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to identify Bohemianism with any system of opinions, or any condition of life. Charles the Second cared not a straw more for popular freedom than Louis the Fourteenth; and Louis the Fourteenth was not a whit more moral than Charles the Second. But Charles was an arrant Bohemian; while Louis absolutely enjoyed the routine, and conventionalism, and etiquette of life, and maintained the stiffest external decorum, whatever his private amusements might be. Again, Fielding was an almost typical Bohemian. There is a passage in his cousin Lady Mary's *Letters*, about his perfect happiness so long as the means of immediate enjoyment were before him, which might serve for a description of the Bohemian *Aethos*. But so was that excellent and moral champion of Church and State, Dr. Johnson. His preference for tavern life—the difficulty of getting him into a clean shirt and out to a regular dinner-party—his careless habits at private houses, which so distressed Mrs. Boswell—were all Bohemian to the core. The quiet Lamb was as essentially Bohemian as the violent Porson. And if we turn from history to fiction, we shall find that the class includes Tom Pinch as well as Fred. Bayham. In short, Bohemianism is a form of character, rather than a school of opinion or a creation of circumstances. I have lost two friends of the persuasion during the last twelvemonth. One left a hundred and fifty thousand pounds: the other regarded all families as upstart that had risen since the Reformation, which he looked upon as a plebeian and overrated movement. So that a Bohemian must not necessarily be supposed to be an adventurer, or a revolutionist, or a toper even; though it may readily be conceded that the Bohemian view of life tends to develop characters of a genial and glowing eccentricity, to whom tea is dear rather as the restoring stimulant of the morning, than as the mild inspirer of the wisdom and morality of a staid assemblage at the close of the day.

The worst of these clever and pleasant fellows is (and the cleverer and stranger they are, the harder it often goes with them,) that they

have a way of dying off as they draw towards forty. They may see people under the table, but people get their revenge by seeing them under the sod. Let me open that photographic album which every man has in his memory, to try and find you some portraits of the wilder Bohemians I have known.

Old Bertie of the *Patagonian*, a line-of-battle ship that I served in 184-, was the earliest Bohemian I remember. He was a ten years' mate,—a phenomenon quite unknown now-a-days, when the mate has become a sub-lieutenant, and when most men are lieutenants at two or three and twenty. As a youngster, I fell under Bertie's protection, who used my towels and Windsor soap at his toilette; flung a camp-stool at my head when he was crapulous; made me run his messages and listen to his yarns; and was of dubious benefit even in his kindest moments. "Jemmy my boy," he said, when we had beat up to the anchorage in Gibraltar Bay, under double-reefed topsails, "you've never been through the Gut before, and I'll make you drunk! Steward, a bottle of champagne!" Bertie was so inherently Bohemian, that he had rarely through life returned to see his family on being paid off from a commission. The Union at Plymouth, the Quebec at Portsmouth, Hatchett's in Piccadilly knew him well, but he had a vague impatience of the paternal roof, and they rarely knew more of him there, than that he was in the Pacific, or the East Indies, or that somebody had met him at Barbadoes or Bermuda. His father disinherited him in favour of a younger brother, and it was said that Bertie could have disputed the will. But the younger brother knew his man, and ministering to his simple wants by occasional ten-pound notes, secured the undisturbed enjoyment of the estate. And so Bertie jogged on—occasionally staggering a little—through life; was a capital though rather brutal officer; a quarrelsome but honourable messmate; fought several duels with military men, against whose cloth he had the old and now almost entirely extinct nautical prejudice, and died without ever attaining the rank of lieutenant, after some seventeen years service afloat.

This was a man of the old school. The younger Bohemians of the service, of my own standing, were a more polished breed—though none of them could have kept a lower deck in order like Bertie, from whose red nose the men ran as from a glimpse of the nether fires. They were generally, indeed, what used to be called Q.H.B.'s—Queen's hard bargains—from a professional point of view; and this I take to be characteristic of most true Bohemians, wherever you find them. They may be soldiers, or sailors, or painters, or authors, as the case may be; but there appears to be a narrowness in professional pursuits which repels them, and if they achieve anything good, it is by native power rather than application. Old Bertie, though he habitually abused the service, knew the work; but the younger men of his kidney, I used to remark, rather thought it the swell thing *not* to know the work. "What is your opinion, sir," said a pompous old visitor to one of these fellows,

"of Her Majesty's ship *Vanguard*?" "The *Vanguard*! They've got the best Madeira in the squadron on board her," was the reply. It was useless to look for information as to the merits of Sir William Symonds's ships in *that* quarter. But if it came to the best house at Malta for roast quails, thrashing a Maltese policeman, cruising to catch turtle at Scanderoon,—

dapibus supremi
Grata TESTUDO Jovis!

choosing an amber mouthpiece at the bazaar at Beyrouth,—then there were few better authorities than the speaker on the Mediterranean station.

But what all such youngsters admired more than any other character was a London Bohemian, whenever chance brought a specimen of the breed to recruit himself in the mild air of the South. I remember a gloomy, broken-down swell, who used to frequent the little opera-house in Strada Teatro, at Malta, and whose sneers at the resources of the island made certain lads, who had previously flattered themselves that the place was quite vicious, perfectly miserable. This Bohemian I suspect to have been also a blackguard. But another contemporary celebrity, Harry Beecher, of the surveying-vessel *Badger*, was only a Bohemian, and had a large share of human virtues, as well as of the weaknesses of the tribe. He was in the Navy by accident, having been appointed for surveying duties, and was properly a civil engineer by profession. The curious variety of employments which he had previously tried had proved the versatility of his intellect, and developed his inherent vagabondism of character. He was the son of a celebrated musician, who had wished to train him to the command of the violin, which he himself had acquired by twenty years' practice for ten hours a day. Planted before his parent to undergo this discipline, Harry soon dropped it—not the art merely, but the valuable instrument on which he was being taught the art—and the neck of which broke before the paternal eyes. This was his farewell to music, except as far as his naturally excellent voice enabled him to add a charm to a supper, which the elder Beecher had hoped to see him exercise in very different scenes. He then made a voyage to China to look out for an opening in the tea-trade, but could never get up, as he said, any interest in tea. He tried his hand next at the auctioneer business, for which, however, his eloquence, though copious, was too humorous and discursive. He became a wine merchant; but, assisted by his friends, drank up his whole stock. At last, he was put in an engineer's office, and having a natural talent for drawing, became in due time quite able to earn his bread-and-butter. He had a share in the making of one of the great lines of railway from London, and became so familiar with railway life, that he would amuse himself afterwards, when making a journey, by getting out at the carriage windows, and climbing along the roof of the train. He was doing this a few years before I first knew him, when the guard—naturally astonished at the spectacle—pursued

him over the carriages to arrest him. The train passed at the moment under a viaduct. Harry stooped, and suffered no injury ; but the guard was killed before his eyes. This led to my friend's appearance at the assizes ; and he used to describe with considerable power the astonishment of his neighbours at the ordinary, when, after amusing them with his talk, he suddenly jumped up in answer to a functionary who cried, "Henry John Beecher, surrender to your recognizances !" He got off scot-free from this scrape ; but I must do the old fellow the justice to say that he was not insensible to the more serious reflections belonging to the incident.

"Old Ropy," as Beecher was familiarly called in the squadron, from a certain huskiness of voice in the mornings, always wore spectacles and carried a snuff-box, and I found in time that these articles formed sure indications of his pecuniary condition. When he was well off and flourishing, spectacles and snuff-box were both of gold. Did impecuniosity attack him, they were superseded respectively by steel and wood. So firmly was he convinced of the uncertainty of this our mortal condition, that in periods of prosperity he always bought costly articles, from no plebeian ostentation, but with a prudential eye to the future. "It will always be *good* for a tenner," he would say, in mysterious language, on such occasions ; and when I saw his honest eyes looking through rims of the baser metals, I knew that, in the language of Admiral Fitzroy, gales might be expected from opposite quarters successively. He reconciled himself with a truly Bohemian philosophy to reverses of this kind.

We reached home from the Mediterranean at the same time, and Beecher got into easy employment as an engineer, owing to the railway mania. When the Pleb-Biddlecomb and Tompkin-Market line was in full swing as a scheme, with Ropy for engineer, who so magnificent as Ropy ? Then indeed was his snuff-box of the gold of Ophir, and his gloves like Wordsworth's primrose by the river brim. But when the scheme had blown up, and the secretary levanted, was our friend miserable ? Not he. He dined no longer on wild ducks and Madeira, nor rivalled the lilies of the field in his attire. The change in a few weeks was complete and consistent throughout. He did not stick to the relics of his personal splendour in poverty, like a weaker nature ; but dropped from fine linen to a flannel shirt, as he dropped from turtle to à-la-mode beef, four-penn'orth of brisket, and "half-a-pint of porter, *num.*" The two conditions supplied anecdotes to each other. When he was well-off, he told stories of his poverty ; when he was hard-up, he told stories of his splendour. In neither state was he without a congenial circle ; for in an immense city like London, Bohemians are found in all varieties of circumstances. And it is their tendency to live, like their prototypes, in distinct encampments, forming independent centres of life. They form little knots, with their own passwords and jokes ; and have certain taverns, bill-discounters, and pawnbrokers, in common. The advantages

of such an organization are obvious, since a whole encampment is not likely to be destitute at one time of money, credit, prospects, or portable articles of pecuniary value. Let nobody sneer at the moral virtues developed by Bohemianism under such conditions. Is Orestes less a model of friendship because he backs Pylades' bill; or Pylades, because he nurses Orestes through an attack of delirium tremens? Who gets you out of the scrape, when a functionary of Oriental origin makes you the sharer of his expensive hospitality? Your grandad? The old gentleman only sends you his blessing—on which nobody will advance anything. Your brother Bohemian, to be sure: Jack So-and-so, whose acquaintance you made by an accident, and none of whose relations you ever saw.

But to return for a moment to Harry Beecher. Perhaps the queerest and seediest set of Bohemians I recollect was one in which he used to move during his intervals of impecunious obscurity. Their centre was a barber's shop in one of the smaller streets leading out of the Strand, and in which they used to meet daily, to chat and club together their little resources for refreshment. The barber's wife must have maintained his household, for her husband's friends, I used to fancy, always regarded a customer as an intruder, and he himself preferred ardent spirits to the exercise of his profession. To this little shop came Harry Beecher, Dr. Pugh, a Welsh medical man, Captain Flyblow, and some others. The doctor was a snuffy, quiet man, of few words, on whom raw gin produced little more effect than milk. Of his history we knew nothing, nor why he had so completely abandoned the healing art. But there was a whisper that Mrs. Pugh supported him by her labours as a washerwoman; and the notable cleanliness of the doctor's linen gave a strong credibility to the rumour. Captain Flyblow had been many years in the army, but had sold his commission, spent the money, quarrelled with his relations, and was now living on six pounds a month allowed him by his mother, who declined to see him, but would not let him starve. It is characteristic of the incorrigible nature of some men, that month after month Flyblow squandered this pittance in a few days' revelry, with the most perfect consciousness of the suffering which his folly would entail. Yet he had experienced every annoyance that imprudence can bring upon the sons of men. He had been chased by bailiffs, till, like the stag at bay, he had betaken himself to the waters, and had passed weeks in the Thames steamers—breakfasting meagrely in the *Bridegroom*—dining sadly on a "polony" and a penny-roll in the *Wedding-Ring*—landing cautiously after dusk at Essex Pier from the *Summer Queen*.

At the time of which I am speaking, he was at that stage when no old creditor thought him worth powder and shot, and he enjoyed free range over the desolate heath of poverty. His great resource towards the end of the month was a humble hostelry named the "Dog and Duck." Here, the 'expatriate,' as he was called, often enjoyed a temporary

bed-room which was reached by a ladder. Here, if a more prosperous friend invited him to dinner, he would jauntily reply, " You'll excuse me if I'm rather punctual." Here, too, Worbois, the landlord, would sometimes ask him to the family joint on Sunday—for which I fear he would yet charge him eighteen-pence when the time came for cashing the little monthly cheque. On such Sundays, the 'captain' would take in Mrs. W. on his arm from the bar—the corpulent, good woman delighting in the ceremonies of polite life; and his military title seemed to throw a halo over the boiled pork and pease-pudding. Finally, indeed, I believe that title brought him as wife a tradesman's widow with a little money, under whose care he ended his life peacefully, dying of dropsy on his hearth-rug, with a pipe in his mouth. They are all gone, that little circle of the barber's shop. The barber himself has gazed at the Beard of Charon ; and poor Harry Beecher, who was sometimes among, though never of them, sleeps in the Hebrides, where (having once more entered the surveying service) he died. I had made his acquaintance among the orange and almond trees, in the soft clear air of Malta. I stood by his grave amidst the blue and misty peaks of wild, romantic Skye. And thereby hangs, too, a brief tale.

While talking at the door of the Portree inn with the landlord, who had known my old friend, I saw approach a broken, bloated figure in a pilot-coat—a strange wreck of an English gentleman to have washed up on that stormy coast. " Who is that ? " I asked, as he moved away. " That, sir," the landlord said, smacking his lips over the name, " that is the Honourable Alfred Monthermer, third son of the Earl of Daneville—a commander in the Navy ! " The curious interest and wonder I had felt about the figure were explained, and my thoughts flew back just twenty-one years. " What, the little pale youngster with an eyeglass, of the *Boanerges*, that lay near us in Plymouth Sound ! " Picnics to the Breakwater; evening-parties, where we judiciously danced with the Captain's daughters; cigars on the sly, when out of the reach of oldsters indifferent to the vice, but liking to lick you for committing it—all floated through the mind as I gazed after the figure of the man, broken, beaten, bedevilled, and forsaken at the age of thirty-five ! Then I formed a little theory of the history. The accident of a fast messmate or two to develop the latent tendency to " go a-mucker ; " the fatal tick at Malta, and the presents of filigree and other work to a young Sicilian there; brandy-and-water to relieve the languor of the *sirocco*, charet and soda to temper the rays of the Dogstar ; allowance outrun and money borrowed from the landlord of the Jervis' Head, at Portsmouth—a spell in the West Indies inflaming the growing thirst—and then " Monthemer drinks." He forgets to report Galita Light to one skipper; and another comes up at two bells in the middle watch, and finds him asleep in the hammock netting. He goes from ship to ship—with no open scandal, but pursued by a mysterious blight. There is a snug court of inquiry, and he is " invalidated " soon after. High-born aunts of an

evangelical turn get wind of the state of things, and die, leaving him nothing. The elder brother is glad of an excuse for buttoning up his pockets ; but at last there is no ship to be got for Alfred, and he is packed off to the Highlands, to be cured of drunkenness in the land of whiskey. There are establishments dotted over the Western counties where they profess to do that kind of thing ; but bless you ! the patients get mysteriously drunk for all that,—the whiskey seems to be in the air. And, after a few years of deepening degradation, young Hopeful now becomes young Hopeless—dies. The family solicitor sees a good opportunity of giving a holiday to one of the senior clerks, who runs down and buries our friend, and is very glad of the trip. There, my brisk young gentleman of the “Rag,” making the hay of pleasure, in the Hay Market, while the sun shines,—how do you like the programme ? The grave is open before us, and the polite moralist bows, and says, “*After you !*”

But then, as has been hinted already, this kind of thing is no necessary part, though it is a conspicuous part, of Bohemianism. There is a Bohemianism of ideas,—a gipsy life where tea is drunk, and where any poultry that may be in the kettle has been paid for. I have chosen the biographical plan, you see, for this essay ; and I shall illustrate the particular Bohemianism now in question from the career of poor Dick South. Dick was the son of a well-to-do gentleman, who had intended him to be a solicitor, or some useful working man of that kind. The way was open to him to have a good house in Bloomsbury, and to eat good dinners, like the rest of his class. But Dick returned from college in Germany a dabbler in metaphysics, a republican in politics, and firmly determined on two things—that he would not be a solicitor, and that he would be a genius.

The first resolution was easily carried out, though of course it involved a quarrel with Mr. South the elder. But the attempt to carry out the second cost poor Dick years of trouble and agitation, and brought him to a melancholy end in a foreign land. The explanation of this was a kind of *crack* somewhere in Dick’s organization which spoilt the effect of everything that he tried. He was certainly not without talent ; but after writing sensibly and well for a few pages, he was sure to break into some extravagance which ruined the whole. He was certainly good-natured and friendly at bottom ; but he believed that all mankind were in a conspiracy to put “a genius” down, and so he was never a safe character to be in contact with. If you entered a shop with Dick, and his humble order was not instantly attended to, you saw his cheek beginning to redden and his eye to glare. Counterjumpers were in personal danger from him, as “brutal traders who did not recognize the superiority of mind.”

Vanity, in a word, vanity, morbid in itself, and indicating other mental morbidity, was fatal to Dick South. The Bohemian thirst for liquor was in his case represented by a mad thirst for fame. When he got a little money, he was guilty of no personal extravagance : he

never acted like other Bohemians who would dine one day on Palestine soup, grouse, and '44 claret, though it involved dining the next two days on a cup of chocolate and a bun at an Italian refugee's ice-shop in Oxford Street. No. He first laid in a large cheese of the less luxurious kind, as a bulwark against starvation, and then spent every shilling in getting out the little volume of poems, or pamphlets, which was to make him first famous and finally immortal. In these productions you could always see that the one figure present to Dick's imagination was Dick himself. If he wrote a tale, there was sure to enter on the scene "a certain stranger in a green coat," whom "the passers-by turned to look at as he strode haughtily," &c. Now Dick, though he squinted, certainly had an intelligent head, but none of us ever felt that "mysterious awe" of him, which he fancied that he generally inspired. I am sure that when, in one of his poems, he exclaimed,—

I'd give this life, but once from aid afar
To stand armed face to face with Russia's Czar,

we would all have wagered three to one on the late Emperor, who was nearly twice as big as our friend. It will be obvious from what I have said, that his publications were uniformly failures, and the straits to which they reduced him were of the most gloomy kind. One period occurs to me when he lived in a garret at the top of one of the smaller inns of court; when the same vessel served him for coffee-pot and shaving-water, and his coal-scuttle was an old doubled-up map of the world. Dick would look round this den and say, "This is what my opinions have brought me to!" For it pleased him to think that he was kept down by his republicanism; and when he had made a speech to a Chartist meeting, he was delighted with the notion that he was under the surveillance of the police. The poor soul needed these consolations; for once, when he came among us in a state of exuberant hilarity which rather puzzled the company, Gilbert Morris explained it to our satisfaction in a sentence—"By Jove, he's been haring meat!" About the same time, too, Blotch having entertained a party, of whom Dick South was one, at his rooms in Gray's Inn, Dick made, when the feast was being discussed afterwards, a memorable observation. "Well, South—a comfortable feed, wasn't it?" "Humph," growled Dick, "I thought him rather ostentatious—with his leg of mutton!" Yet Dick himself had his fits of ostentation. He once asked Gilbert Morris and the present writer to dinner, with an *empressement* which rather surprised us. On arriving we found Dick in a silk waistcoat, and with an air of stateliness about him for which we were not prepared. Finding the dinner lag a little (an incident annoying anywhere, but *alarming* in a Bohemian household), Gilbert and I refreshed ourselves with an orange which—cut in two—lay on the mantel-piece. "Confound it!" exclaimed Dick, angrily, when he saw what we had done, "you've eaten the dessert!" The good harmless Dick, who would have shared his last sixpence with a friend,

and whose vanity was his worst fault, deserved a better fate than at last befell him. Europe having failed to appreciate his genius, he went to America; found that it was as easy to starve in a republic, if people did not like your writings, as in a monarchy; and finally died by his own hand.

Blotch, the friend of Dick South above mentioned, deserves a paragraph. He, too, was a republican, but otherwise was less set on mere speculations, like poor Dick, than on heavy sensuality. His relations to the parental Mr. Blotch were precisely those of his friend to the parental Mr. South. He had been rusticated, whilst at Cambridge, for an exploit that did not promise well for his future morals. But his father persisted in hoping that he would still be an ornament of the Church, and made it the condition of reconciliation, and pecuniary support, that he should pass the Voluntary Theological. With many a curse, Blotch applied himself to the study of our faith. He took innumerable pots of porter over Justin Martyr, and his copy of the Greek Testament smelt fearfully of bird's-eye. He spoke of Papias as an old bloke, and of Butler as an old buffer. After going in for the examination, he returned to town to await the appearance of the list, and was nightly to be seen employed upon the kidney of Evans or the lobster of Quinn. But in his gayest moods, he was haunted by the thought of what might be, or might not be, in the morrow's *Times*. In due time, the list appeared—without the name of Blotch. Next day, a cart might have been observed passing over Waterloo Bridge from the southern side of the river. On nearer inspection, two gentlemen were to be seen behind the driver, sitting on certain boxes, and smoking tranquil clays. They were Blotch and an intimate friend of Blotch's, and they were en route to a pawn-broker's with all Blotch's books,—classics, mathematics, and divinity. The eloquent Cicero went to his *arunculus*. Saint Augustine ascended to a beatified region where saints and fathers are at rest. And the studies of Blotch were at an end for ever. He disappeared from the country whose Church he had intended to adorn a year or two afterwards. His father gave him a thousand pounds, and told him to go to Australia, or farther if possible. Nor would his creditors have touched a shilling of that money, but for the ingenuity of a daring bailiff, who, descending the chimney of Blotch's chambers, impounded a coat in which the cheque was, and enforced an arrangement. Why is there no series called *Lives of the Bailiffs*, as we have *Lives of the Admirals*, *Lives of the Chancellors*, and so forth?

The career of Blotch in Australia is said to have been curious and varied. He has served the colony of Victoria as a policeman. He has kept a grog-shop. He has been a gravedigger. He has been a shepherd. The world knows nothing of its most useful Bohemians in all ages, and yet, what but the Bohemian spirit has made us a great maritime and colonial power? There were graver elements I admit, too; but without the careless, rollicking, unattached, social outlaw of a fellow,

you would never have got your rough work done. Some of your fine work, too, in the cause of the spread of British greatness has been due to the same spirit. A dash of Bohemianism must be claimed as existing in your Spekes and Burtons; and many a good fellow, both officer and private, who fell before Sebastopol and Delhi, was there because he belonged to the brotherhood.

And this brings me to the reflection that we are apt unduly to narrow the popular conception of the character by talking as if authors and artists and actors were the only Bohemians worth describing. The French always regard student life and literary life as the great source of the humour of the subject, which is true enough in its way, but not the whole truth. Having made the protest, however, let me go on to consider what distinguished Bohemians I have known in these last-mentioned departments.

The classical Bohemian was going out about the time my earliest recollections begin—I mean the fellow who translated *Lucy Neal* into Latin, and *Old Dan Tucker* into Greek; who had a pun from Horace ready for every contingency, and who may be said, by a double figure, to have thought no punch good that was not made from the water of the Aranippe. A classical Bohemian held not only that a knowledge of the ancient literature atoned for everything, but that the want of it was fatal to all other merit. Humour seemed to my old friend Oakham to consist in ever new ways of putting the fact that a man could not construe. “I should like to put him *on* in the *Pro Clientio*, sir,” he would say, when Amseed Potts, of the *Mausoleum*, was mentioned. “Will you be kind enough, Mr. Potts,” he asked that editor once, “to follow *fero* through all ‘windings?’” It was great fun to see him reviewing a divine, especially a divine of a certain Presbyterian school. “The doctor thinks there was no occasion to publish the Apocrypha from this codex; we suppose on the principle, that *the less Greek the better*.” What would Oakham have said to a later school of Bohemians, who affect to talk of Horace as “that jolly little fellow, Flaccus,” but who get their quotations from Smart, and then find out what the Latin is afterwards! The worst of this plan is, that the ingenious writer is apt to quote the wrong bit of Latin, and to convey to the educated public an entirely different meaning from that which he intends.

As every exaggeration breeds its opposite, so the classical Bohemians were succeeded by men like that arch-Bohemian Ned Wexford, who, though one of the cleverest fellows of his time, used to ask whether Cicero had anything in him? and whether Aristophanes would, if alive now, be allowed to write in *Punch*? Ned’s prejudice against the ancients was, that they were generally respected by the established Powers of the world, with which he was in perpetual war. He delighted to sow a little seed of revolution as he lounged for his pleasure through the streets. “Why beg of me, my good man?” he asked a mendicant. “Go to the Bishop of London—he’s got twenty thousand a

year!" And yet Ned was full of humanity, as he showed in one most remarkable instance which deserves recording. In a neighbourhood where he once lived, a certain house was in a state of siege. So close was the blockade that the bailiff, rather than leave his post, endured every extremity of cold and hunger. Wexford, passing by, saw the position, and immediately entering the nearest "public," ordered bread-and-cheese, and a pot of porter—whose light white coronal of foam might have melted the heart of a teetotaller. "Send these," he nobly said, "to the man at the door-step there." "To him, sir!" exclaimed the landlord; "why, he's a bailiff!" "And what then?" Wexford answered; "is a bailiff to starve in the discharge of his duty?" "Well, sir, you h'are a Christian!" was the comment of Caupo. Nor was he far wrong. All Ned's natural sympathies as a man and a Bohemian were with the gentleman besieged. But there was a triumph of principle in feeding the natural foe of his order beyond the Christianity of many writers of tracts. On another occasion, Ned Wexford kindly officiated at the stall of an old lady in Regent Street, and sold her oranges for her while she went and refreshed herself at his expense. He was once found dancing on the beach at that pleasant little Cockney Bair, Southend, for the amusement of some children, among whom he distributed fourpenny-pieces. As a democratic writer, it was his duty to show sympathy with the people; and if his philanthropy had at such periods been artificially stimulated, whose business was that?

Wexford, it will be readily believed, was a great favourite in Bohemia,—with the manly Stodger, who engaged in such terrific combats o' nights, that he would send to you before breakfast begging you to come at once, "bringing a sovereign and a surgeon,"—with the roving Roribel, who used to put up at strange inns, and ring in the morning to ask the waiter where he was—with the playful Bob Marston, who, when the porter at the British Museum demanded his reading-ticket, volunteered in addition to show him his "protection." Bob's horror of the polite and conventional world was such, that he once gave it as a reason for leaving a place, that "the clergyman of the parish had called upon him." "By Jove," he went on "when it came to that, I thought it was time to be going back to London." A dress-coat was a Neesus' shirt to him, and patent-leather boots a torture like the famous "boot" of the seventeenth century. While Wexford was essentially political in his intellectual tastes, Marston belonged to the Comic Bohemians proper. He was pretty sure to be one of the promoters of the innumerable little facetious journals that came out—and went in again—some dozen or fifteen years ago. He wielded the Tomahawk; he glittered in the *Firefly*; the echo of his voice was heard in the snap of the *Cracker*; and he helped to work the machinery which set in motion the terrible *Rack*. Who so merry at the preliminary supper with which such ventures were ushered into the world? Who so philosophically calm, when the sham capitalist had

levanted, owing a small balance to his contributors, and a large one to his paper-maker? Though weak in frame, who charged more nobly, under the banner of Gus Marjoram, the baked-potato shop in Crown Court, from which vile insults had been levelled at the entire staff of the *Pepper-Box*? How kind of thee, Bob, after taking a house, to say to an intimate friend, "I'm a housholder now, old boy, and always good to be bail!" How cheerfully didst thou reflect, when circumstances forced thee to drink the smallest of beer, that at least the stuff had the merit of being *wet!* The law itself did not appal or humiliate thy Aristophanic spirit; for when a cruelly sarcastic beak, in inflicting a fine of five shillings, inquired whether certain fluids did not impregnate thy writings, the answer was ready—"Yes, and they 'll in consequence." Poor Dick South, accosted by a minion of power, who came to arrest him for that "contempt" of a County Court so natural to his aspiring and elevated mind, and who inquired solemnly, "Are you Mr Richard South?" answered in his dramatic and impressive way—"I am that unhappy man!" But thou, Bob Marston, wert of a merrier kidney. The great devil of dyspepsia himself could not always subdue thee: there was a sparkle of wit in thy tears of pain, and thy groan was not infrequently an epigram.

There are great varieties, it will be observed, of Bohemianism, and it must be added that the different clans, though living very much by themselves, yet mingle freely with the general race or nation. The classical Bohemian tolerates in the comic one an absence of Greek which he would think infamous in a bishop. The Bohemian of art, showing his contempt for conventionalism by partaking of a penn'orth of whelks in the street, throws his studio open to his brother of the literary tribe, who, availing himself of a shakedown there, finds himself, it may be, when he wakes, in bed with an American poet. Radicalism and Toryism make no difference, as far as personal relations are concerned, to the Bohemians of the press.

Few men in London (the Prague, or capital of the nation) were better friends than the essentially democratic Bob Marston, and the great feudal Bohemian, Jack Pringle, the Lion of the North. No double-distilled old Tory of the Winchelsea or Newcastle breed ever surpassed Jack in devotion to the monarchy and nobility of these realms. Sprung from a most ancient Helder family, which for ages had laughed at the shaking of the English tree, he was as fine a specimen of the "Scot Abroad" as any gentleman described in the pleasant page of Mr. John Hill Burton. He added a certain romantic and pungent element to the London Bohemianism, which is essentially of the town towny. A clear blue northern eye, a tall and manly figure, and a chivalresque politeness at once cordial and stately, conciliated to him the regard of men whose ways and thinking about life and books were altogether different. The Bohemian is professedly tolerant, for he only wants to be amused; and Jack Pringle's aristocratic Toryism was invested with a humour and a jollity both extravagant,

but both real. He could have drunk fair with Rollo or Harold Blaatand. He would have opened a vein in his arm if there was no other way of paying for a brother Bohemian's beer. And he could sustain his opinions by a most excellent knowledge of the feudal and genealogical history of Great Britain—to read about which was his only study, as to write about it was his only profession. In the regular born Bohemian, the Bohemianism of his life passes into his ideas, and that of his ideas into his life. So Jack was as one-sided in his feudal, as old Oakham, mentioned above, in his classical view. His aristocracy was as fierce as that of Balzac's "Prince de la Bohême," who rejoices in the name and title of "Gabriel - Jean - Anne - Victor - Benjamin - Georges - Ferdinand - Charles-Edouard Rusticoli, Comte de la Palferine." Many readers will remember how that brilliant Bohemian of Paris finds a friend quarrelling with a bourgeois on the boulevards, and astonishes the man by the question, "*Monsieur, est-il né?*" When he draws from him that his name is "Godin," the prince exclaims, "*Godin! Cela n'existe pas : vous n'êtes rien, Godin!*" Jack Pringle had never read Balzac. His interest in the French ended with '89. But he went quite as great lengths as the Comte de la Palferine. Once, when a stranger was talking loudly in a coffee-room, Jack addressed him thus: "Is your name Neville, sir?" "No," was the reply. "I thought it was at least Neville, sir, from the prominence you are giving yourself," Jack said. Another time he rather startled me by shouting across a large dinner-table, where a certain "Lord Somebody" was mentioned, "Is that man a gentleman, —?" He always affected to use the word "gentleman" in its original and primitive sense of *gentilhomme* or *gentiluomo*; nor did he willingly even read the books of men whom he believed not entitled to that designation. For Hume, Scott, Clarendon, Comines, Jack would loudly express his admiration; but he ranked Tom Moore with fiddlers. His admiration, too, was always expressed in the lofty terms derived from the incessant perusal of books describing great historical crises. "Tom Kilby, sir," he said of a common friend of ours, "is one of Clarendon's heroes." In Jack's own books, if you open them at random, you are pretty sure to light on passages beginning, "'Dog,' exclaimed the Grand Master, fiercely;" or, "So saying, the great earl put spurs to his horse," &c. The present Earl of Derby was never spoken of by Jack, except as "THE EARL." Many a bumper he drained to him, and many a Herculean drinker and London Cockney drank at Jack Pringle's expense by drinking the Earl's health. On festive rambles it was difficult to be with Jack without incurring personal risk. Once, when we were riding together in Sussex, he proposed that we should carry off a cow in the old Border fashion; but I felt sure the humour of the proceeding would not be appreciated at Lewes amazons. At these times he was peculiarly characteristic. Nothing could exceed his courtesy to the common people, whom he thought it his duty *en bon gentilhomme* to protect. But if accident brought him into collision with a prosperous middle-class man, he was

severely and ironically polite, or haughtily contemptuous. "I am a poor Scottish gentleman, sir, it is true," he would say, "but we are not yet unable to protect ourselves from plebeian arrogance." *Vale, Vale*, O good Jack Pringle. Thy grave shall not want thy favourite white rose—a plant which, in our Scottish history, always required much moisture, whether of blood or wine.

Here, I close my album, not for want of more portraits, but because a sufficient number has been shown to illustrate the particular phase of life and character with which I have had to deal. "A queer collection," you will say, "of oddities, loose fish, and ne'er-do-wells." So be it, if you like, for it is my business on this occasion, not to preach, but to paint. Only, the preacher ought not to exaggerate any more than the painter; and, after all said and done, Bohemianism is not so bad as it looks. To many men it is a mere youthful phase, through which they pass with increased experience and geniality enriched, to the solid industry and quiet duties of domestic life. Nor do the more thorough-going Bohemians pass away without doing what is often a larger share of the work of the world than more commonplace men. My old messmate Bertie was a capital officer. Harry Beecher helped to make the Eastern Counties Railway. The Liberals are under obligation to Ned Wexford. Thousands have received pleasure at the theatres from the genius of Bob Marston. The historical books of Jack Pringle will help to make your son a man and a gentleman. What is called Bohemianism, in a word, gives a certain freshness and colour to life which is not appreciated without inquiry; its gas is in your fiction and art, making them brisk and enlivening as your champagne; it breaks the monotony of industry, and checks the excesses of want; and while the evil side of it brings its own punishment, its good element works too in the world, and entitles it, at all events, to a special place in any account of the varieties of modern life.

Note on the Article "Shakspeare in France."

We gladly insert the following correction of a remark made by us in our last number:—

Hauteville House, 2 Janvier, 1865.

Permettez-moi, Monsieur, d'appeler votre attention sur la note suivante, qui vous prouvera que, si j'ai cru devoir attribuer au fils de Shakspeare le nom de *Hamlet*, je n'ai pas précisément été coupable d'inadvertance, comme vous le donnez à entendre dans l'article de votre Revue intitulé "*Shakespeare in France.*" Cette note est signée de Malone et insérée à la page 135 du premier volume de la grande édition publiée en 1803 par les éditeurs de Londres associés :

"*Hamnet* and *Hamlet* seem to have been considered as the same name, and to have been used indiscriminately, both in speaking and writing. Thus, this Mr. Hamnet Sadler, who is a witness to Shakspeare's will, writes his Christian name *Hamnet*; but the scrivener who drew up the will, writes it *Hamlet*. There is the same variation in the register of Stratford, where the name is spelt in three or four different ways. Thus, among the baptisms we find, in 1591—' May 26, John filius *Hamleti* Sadler,' and in 1583—' Sept. 13, Margaret, daughter to *Hamlet* Sadler.' But in 1588, we find—' John, son to *Hamnet* Sadler,' in 1597-8—' Feb. 3, Wilhelmus filius *Hamnet* Sadler.' This Mr. Sadler died in 1624, and the entry of his burial stands thus—' 1624, Oct. 26, *Hamlet* Sadler.' So also in that of his wife—' 1623, March 23, Judith uxor *Hamlet* Sadler.' The name of *Hamlet* occurs in several other entries in the register. Oct. 4, 1576, '*Hamlet*, son to Humphry Holdar,' was buried; and Sept. 28, 1564, '*Catharina* uxor *Hamleti* Hassell.'"

Dans mon opinion, le nom de *Hamnet*, attribué à l'enfant du poète par le registre de Stratford, doit être rangé dans la catégorie des trop nombreux barbarismes communs par le tabellion évidemment fort rustique de cette bonne ville.

Cette observation faite, j'ai hâte, Monsieur, de vous dire combien je suis sensible à l'indulgence de votre critique à mon égard, et je vous prie d'agréer avec mes remerciements l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

FRANÇOIS VICTOR HUGO.

A Monsieur l'Éditeur du "Cornhill Magazine."

We must observe, however, that if Malone is the authority for the possibility of Shakspeare having given the name of *Hamlet* to his son, Malone at the same time gives the very plain and sufficient reason why that name was chosen, and utterly sets aside the reasons suggested by M. François Victor Hugo.



A. LANGE & SÖHNE U.S.A.

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1865.

Aymadale.

—♦—
BOOK THE THIRD.
—♦—

CHAPTER I.

LURKING MISCHIEF.

1.—*From Ozias Midwinter to Mr. Brock.*

"Thorpe-Ambrose,

"June 15th, 1851.



EAR MR. BROCK,— Only an hour since, we reached this house, just as the servants were locking up for the night. Allan has gone to bed, worn out by our long day's journey, and has left me in the room they call the library, to tell you the story of our journey to Norfolk. Being better seasoned than he is to fatigues of all kinds, my eyes are quite wakeful enough for writing a letter, though the clock on the chimneypiece points to midnight, and we have been travelling since ten in the morning.

"The last news you had of us was news sent by Allen from the Isle of Man. If I am not mistaken, he wrote to tell you of the night we passed on board the wrecked ship. Forgive me, dear Mr. Brock, I say nothing on that subject until

time has helped me to think of it with a quieter mind. The hard fight against myself must all be fought over again ; but I will win it yet, please God ; I will indeed.

"There is no need to trouble you with any account of our journeys about the northern and western districts of the island ; or of the short cruises we took when the repairs of the yacht were at last complete. It will be better if I get on at once to the morning of yesterday—the fourteenth. We had come in with the night-tide to Douglas harbour ; and, as soon as the post-office was open, Allan, by my advice, sent on shore for letters. The messenger returned with one letter only ; and the writer of it proved to be the former mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose—Mrs. Blanchard.

"You ought to be informed, I think, of the contents of this letter ; for it has seriously influenced Allan's plans. He loses everything, sooner or later, as you know, and he has lost the letter already. So I must give you the substance of what Mrs. Blanchard wrote to him, as plainly as I can.

"The first page announced the departure of the ladies from Thorpe-Ambrose. They left on the day before yesterday—the thirteenth—having, after much hesitation, finally decided on going abroad, to visit some old friends settled in Italy, in the neighbourhood of Florence. It appears to be quite possible that Mrs. Blanchard and her niece may settle there too, if they can find a suitable house and grounds to let. They both like the Italian country and the Italian people, and they are well enough off to please themselves. The elder lady has her jointure, and the younger is in possession of all her father's fortune.

"The next page of the letter was, in Allan's opinion, far from a pleasant page to read. After referring, in the most grateful terms, to the kindness which had left her niece and herself free to leave their old home at their own time, Mrs. Blanchard added that Allan's considerate conduct had produced such a strongly favourable impression among the friends and dependants of the family, that they were desirous of giving him a public reception on his arrival among them. A preliminary meeting of the tenants on the estate and the principal persons in the neighbouring town, had already been held to discuss the arrangements ; and a letter might be expected shortly from the clergyman, inquiring when it would suit Mr. Ardmale's convenience to take possession personally and publicly of his estates in North.

"You will now be able to guess the cause of our sudden departure from the Isle of Man. The first and strongest idea in your old pupil's mind, as soon as he had seen Mrs. Blanchard's account of the proceedings at the meeting, was the idea of escaping the public reception ; and the one certain way he could see of avoiding it, was to start for Thorpe-Ambrose before the clergyman's letter could reach him. I tried hard to make him think a little before he acted on his first impulse in this matter ; but he only went on packing his portmanteau in his own impenetrably good-humoured way. In ten minutes his luggage was ready ; and in five

minutes more he had given the crew their directions for taking the yacht back to Somersetshire. The steamer to Liverpool was alongside of us in the harbour, and I had really no choice but to go on board with him, or to let him go by himself. I spare you the account of our stormy voyage, of our detention at Liverpool, and of the trains we missed on our journey across the country. You know that we have got here safely, and that is enough. What the servants think of the new squire's sudden appearance among them, without a word of warning, is of no great consequence. What the committee for arranging the public reception may think of it, when the news flies abroad to-morrow, is, I am afraid, a more serious matter.

"Having already mentioned the servants, I may proceed to tell you that the latter part of Mrs. Blanchard's letter was entirely devoted to instructing Allan on the subject of the domestic establishment which she has left behind her. It seems that all the servants, indoors and out (with three exceptions), are waiting here, on the chance that Allan will continue them in their places. Two of these exceptions are readily accounted for : Mrs. Blanchard's maid and Miss Blanchard's maid go abroad with their mistresses. The third exceptional case is the case of the upper housemaid : and here there is a little hitch. In plain words, the housemaid has been sent away at a moment's notice, for what Mrs. Blanchard rather mysteriously describes as 'levity of conduct with a stranger.'

"I am afraid you will laugh at me, but I must confess the truth. I have been made so distrustful (after what happened to us in the Isle of Man) of even the most trifling misadventures which connect themselves in any way with Allan's introduction to his new life and prospects, that I have already questioned one of the men-servants here about this apparently unimportant matter of the housemaid's going away in disgrace. All I can learn is, that a strange man had been noticed hanging suspiciously about the grounds ; that the housemaid was so ugly a woman as to render it next to a certainty that he had some underhand purpose to serve in making himself agreeable to her ; and that he has not as yet been seen again in the neighbourhood since the day of her dismissal. So much for the one servant who has been turned out at Thorpe-Ambrose. I can only hope there is no trouble for Allan brewing in that quarter. As for the other servants who remain, Mrs. Blanchard describes them, both men and women, as perfectly trustworthy ; and they will all, no doubt, continue to occupy their present places.

"Having now done with Mrs. Blanchard's letter, my next duty is to beg you, in Allan's name and with Allan's love, to come here and stay with him at the earliest moment when you can leave Somersetshire. Although I cannot presume to think that my own wishes will have any special influence in determining you to accept this invitation, I must nevertheless acknowledge that I have a reason of my own for earnestly desiring to see you here. Allan has innocently caused me a new anxiety about my future relations with him ; and I sorely need your advice to show me the right way of setting that anxiety at rest.

"The difficulty which now perplexes me relates to the steward's place at Thorpe-Ambrose. Before to-day, I only knew that Allan had hit on some plan of his own for dealing with this matter; rather strangely involving, among other results, the letting of the cottage which was the old steward's place of abode, in consequence of the new steward's contemplated residence in the great house. A chance word in our conversation on the journey here, led Allan into speaking out more plainly than he had spoken yet; and I heard, to my unutterable astonishment, that the person who was at the bottom of the whole arrangement about the steward was no other than myself!

"It is needless to tell you how I felt this new instance of Allan's kindness. The first pleasure of hearing from his own lips that I had deserved the strongest proof he could give of his confidence in me, was soon dashed by the pain which mixes itself with all pleasure—at least, with all that I have ever known. Never has my past life seemed so dreary to look back on as it seems now, when I feel how entirely it has unsuited me to take the place of all others that I should have liked to occupy in my friend's service. I mustered courage to tell him that I had none of the business knowledge and business experience which his steward ought to possess. He generously met the objection by telling me that I could learn; and he promised to send to London for the person who had already been employed for the time being in the steward's office, and who would, therefore, be perfectly competent to teach me. Do you, too, think I can learn? If you do, I will work day and night to instruct myself. But if (as I am afraid) the steward's duties are of far too serious a kind to be learnt off-hand by a man so young and so inexperienced as I am—then, pray hasten your journey to Thorpe-Ambrose, and exert your influence over Allan personally. Nothing less will induce him to pass me over, and to employ a steward who is really fit to take the place. Pray, pray, act in this matter as you think best for Allan's interests. Whatever disappointment I may feel, he shall not see it.

"Believe me, dear Mr. Brock,

"Gratefully yours,

"OZIAS MIDWINTER.

"P.S.—I open the envelope again, to add one word more. If you have heard or seen anything since your return to Somersetshire of the woman in the black dress and the red shawl, I hope you will not forget, when you write, to let me know it.—O. M."

2.—From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.

* Ladies' Toilette Repository, Diana Street, Pimlico: Wednesday.

"MY DEAR LYDIA,—To save the post, I write to you, after a long day's worry at my place of business, on the business letter-paper, having news since we last met, which it seems advisable to send you at the earliest opportunity.

"To begin at the beginning. After carefully considering the thing, I am quite sure you will do wisely with young Armadale if you hold your tongue about Madeira and all that happened there. Your position was, no doubt, a very strong one with his mother. You had privately helped her in playing a trick on her own father—you had been ungratefully dismissed, at a pitifully tender age, as soon as you had served her purpose—and when you came upon her suddenly, after a separation of more than twenty years, you found her in failing health, with a grown-up son, whom she had kept in total ignorance of the true story of her marriage. Have you any such advantages as these with the young gentleman who has survived her? If he is not a born idiot, he will decline to believe your shocking aspersions on the memory of his mother; and—seeing that you have no proofs at this distance of time to meet him with—there is an end of your money-grubbing in the golden Armadale diggings. Mind! I don't dispute that the old lady's heavy debt of obligation, after what you did for her in Madeira, is not paid yet; and that the son is the next person to settle with you, now the mother has slipped through your fingers. Only squeeze him the right way, my dear, that's what I venture to suggest—squeeze him the right way.

"And which is the right way? This brings me to my news. Have you thought again of that other notion of yours of trying your hand on this lucky young gentleman, with nothing but your own good looks and your own quick wits to help you? The idea hung on my mind so strangely after you were gone, that it ended in my sending a little note to my lawyer, to have the will under which young Armadale has got his fortune, examined at Doctors' Commons. The result turns out to be something infinitely more encouraging than either you or I could possibly have hoped for. After the lawyer's report to me, there cannot be a moment's doubt of what you ought to do. In two words, Lydia, take the bull by the horns—and marry him!!!

"I am quite serious. He is much better worth the venture than you suppose. Only persuade him to make you Mrs. Armadale, and you may set all after-discoveries at flat defiance. As long as he lives, you can make your own terms with him; and, if he dies, the will entitles you, in spite of anything he can say or do—with children, or without them—to an income chargeable on his estate, of *twelve hundred a year for life*. There is no doubt about this—the lawyer himself has looked at the will. Of course Mr. Blanchard had his son, and his son's widow in his eye, when he made the provision. But, as it is not limited to any one heir by name, and not revoked anywhere, it now holds as good with young Armadale as it would have held under other circumstances with Mr. Blanchard's son. What a chance for you, after all the miseries and the dangers you have gone through, to be mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose, if he lives; to have an income for life, if he dies! Hook him, my poor dear; hook him at any sacrifice.

"I dare say you will make the same objection when you read this,

which you made when we were talking about it the other day—I mean the objection of your age. Now, my good creature, just listen to me. The question is—not whether you were five-and-thirty last birthday ; we will own the dreadful truth, and say you were—but whether you do look, or don't look, your real age. My opinion on this matter ought to be, and is, one of the best opinions in London. I have had twenty years' experience among our charming sex in making up battered old faces and worn-out old figures to look like new—and I say positively you don't look a day over thirty, if as much. If you will follow my advice about dressing, and use one or two of my applications privately, I guarantee to put you back three years more. I will forfeit all the money I shall have to advance for you in this matter, if, when I have ground you young again in my wonderful mill, you look more than seven-and-twenty in any man's eyes living—except, of course, when you wake anxious in the small hours of the morning ; and then, my dear, you will be old and ugly in the retirement of your own room, and it won't matter.

" 'But,' you may say, 'supposing all this, here I am, at my very best, a good six— years older than he is ; and that is against me at starting.' Is it ? Just think again. Surely, your own experience must have shown you that the commonest of all common weaknesses, in young fellows of this Armadale's age, is to fall in love with women older than themselves ? Who are the men who really appreciate us in the bloom of our youth (I'm sure I have cause to speak well of the bloom of youth ; I made fifty guineas to-day by putting it on the spotted shoulders of a woman old enough to be your mother),—who are the men, I say, who are ready to worship us when we are mere babies of seventeen ? The gay young gentlemen in the bloom of their own youth ? No ! The cunning old wretches who are on the wrong side of forty.

" And what is the moral of this, as the story-books say ? The moral is that the chances, with such a head as you have got on your shoulders, are all in your favour. If you feel your present forlorn position, as I believe you do ; if you know what a charming woman (in the men's eyes) you can still be, when you please ; and if all your old resolution has really come back, after that shocking outbreak of desperation on board the steamer (natural enough, I own, under the dreadful provocation laid on you), you will want no further persuasion from me to try this experiment. Only to think of how things turn out ! If the other young booby had not jumped into the river after you, *this* young booby would never have had the estate. It really looks as if fate had determined that you were to be Mrs. Armadale, of Thorpe-Ambrose—and who can control his fate, as the poet says ?

" Send me one line to say Yes or No ; and believe me

" Your attached old friend

" MARIA OLDERSHAW."

3.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.*

"Richmond, Thursday.

"YOU OLD WRETCH,—I won't say Yes or No till I have had a long, long look at my glass first. If you had any real regard for anybody but your wicked old self, you would know that the bare idea of marrying again (after what I have gone through) is an idea that makes my flesh creep.

"But there can be no harm in your sending me a little more information, while I am making up my mind. You have got twenty pounds of mine still left out of those things you sold for me : send ten pounds here for my expenses, in a post-office order, and use the other ten for making private inquiries at Thorpe-Ambrose. I want to know when the two Blanchard women go away, and when young Armadale stirs up the dead ashes in the family fireplace. Are you quite sure he will turn out as easy to manage as you think ? If he takes after his hypocrite of a mother, I can tell you this—Judas Iscariot has come to life again.

"I am very comfortable in this lodging. There are lovely flowers in the garden, and the birds wake me in the morning delightfully. I have hired a reasonably good piano. The only man I care two straws about—don't be alarmed ; he was laid in his grave many a long year ago, under the name of BEETHOVEN—keeps me company in my lonely hours. The landlady would keep me company, too, if I would only let her. I hate women. The new curate paid a visit to the other lodger yesterday, and passed me on the lawn as he came out. My eyes have lost nothing yet, at any rate, though I am five-and-thirty ; the poor man actually blushed when I looked at him ! What sort of colour do you think he would have turned, if one of the little birds in the garden had whispered in his ear, and told him the true story of the charming Miss Gwilt ?

"Good-by, Mother Oldershaw. I rather doubt whether I am yours, or anybody's, affectionately ; but we all tell lies at the bottoms of our letters, don't we ? If you are my attached old friend, I must of course be

"Yours affectionately,

"LYDIA GWILT.

"P.S.—Keep your odious powders and paints and washes for the spotted shoulders of your customers ; not one of them shall touch my skin, I promise you. If you really want to be useful, try and find out some quieting draught to keep me from grinding my teeth in my sleep. I shall break them one of these nights ; and then what will become of my beauty, I wonder ?"

4.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

"Ladies' Toilette Repository, Tuesday.

"MY DEAR LYDIA,—It is a thousand pities your letter was not addressed to Mr. Armadale ; your graceful audacity would have charmed him. It doesn't affect me ; I am so well used to it, you know. Why

waste your sparkling wit, my love, on your own impenetrable Oldershaw?—it only splutters and goes out. Will you try and be serious, this next time? I have news for you from Thorpe-Ambrose, which is beyond a joke, and which must not be trifled with.

“An hour after I got your letter, I set the inquiries on foot. Not knowing what consequences they might lead to, I thought it safest to begin in the dark. Instead of employing any of the people whom I have at my own disposal (who know you and know me), I went to the Private Inquiry Office in Shadyside Place, and put the matter in the inspector’s hands, in the character of a perfect stranger, and without mentioning you at all. This was not the cheapest way of going to work, I own; but it was the safest way, which is of much greater consequence.

“The inspector and I understood each other in ten minutes; and the right person for the purpose—the most harmless-looking young man you ever saw in your life—was produced immediately. He left for Thorpe-Ambrose an hour after I saw him. I arranged to call at the office on the afternoons of Saturday, Monday, and to-day, for news. There was no news till to-day—and there I found our Confidential Agent just returned to town, and waiting to favour me with a full account of his trip to Norfolk.

“First of all, let me quiet your mind about those two questions of yours; I have got answers to both the one and the other. The Blanchard women go away to foreign parts on the thirteenth; and young Armadale is at this moment cruising somewhere at sea in his yacht. There is talk at Thorpe-Ambrose of giving him a public reception, and of calling a meeting of the local grandees to settle it all. The speechifying and fuss on these occasions generally wastes plenty of time; and the public reception is not thought likely to meet the new Squire much before the end of the month.

“If our messenger had done no more for us than this, I think he would have earned his money. But the harmless young man is a regular Jesuit at a private inquiry—with this great advantage over all the Popish priests I have ever seen, that he has not got his slyness written in his face. Having to get his information through the female servants, in the usual way, he addressed himself, with admirable discretion, to the ugliest woman in the house. ‘When they are nice-looking, and can pick and choose,’ as he neatly expressed it to me, ‘they waste a great deal of valuable time in deciding on a sweetheart. When they are ugly, and haven’t got the ghost of a chance of choosing, they snap at a sweetheart, if he comes their way, like a starved dog at a bone.’ Acting on these excellent principles, our Confidential Agent succeeded, after certain unavoidable delays, in addressing himself to the upper housemaid at Thorpe-Ambrose, and took full possession of her confidence at the first interview. Bearing his instructions carefully in mind, he encouraged the woman to chatter, and was favoured, of course, with all the gossip of the servants’ hall. The greater part of it (as repeated to me) was of no earthly im-

portance. But I listened patiently, and was rewarded by a valuable discovery at last. Here it is.

"It seems there is an ornamental cottage in the grounds at Thorpe-Ambrose. For some reason unknown, young Arinadale has chosen to let it ; and a tenant has come in already. He is a poor half-pay major in the army, named Milroy—a meek sort of man, by all accounts, with a turn for occupying himself in mechanical pursuits; and with a domestic incumbrance in the shape of a bedridden wife, who has not been seen by anybody. Well, and what of all this? you will ask, with that sparkling impatience which becomes you so well. My dear Lydia, don't sparkle! The man's family affairs seriously concern us both—for, as ill-luck will have it, the man has got a daughter!

"You may imagine how I questioned our agent, and how our agent ransacked his memory, when I stumbled, in due course, on such a discovery as this. If heaven is responsible for women's chattering tongues, heaven be praised! From Miss Blanchard to Miss Blanchard's maid; from Miss Blanchard's maid to Miss Blanchard's aunt's maid; from Miss Blanchard's aunt's maid, to the ugly housemaid; from the ugly housemaid to the harmless-looking young man—so the stream of gossip trickled into the right reservoir at last, and thirsty Mother Oldershaw has drunk it all up. In plain English, my dear, this is how it stands. The major's daughter is a minx just turned sixteen; lively and nice-looking (hateful little wretch!), dowdy in her dress (thank heaven!), and deficient in her manners (thank heaven, again!). She has been brought up at home. The governess who last had charge of her, left before her father moved to Thorpe-Ambrose. Her education stands woefully in want of a finishing touch, and the major doesn't quite know what to do next. None of his friends can recommend him a new governess, and he doesn't like the notion of sending the girl to school. So matters rest at present, on the major's own showing—for so the major expressed himself at a morning call which the father and daughter paid to the ladies at the great house.

"You have now got my promised news, and you will have little difficulty, I think, in agreeing with me, that the Arinadale business must be settled at once, one way or the other. If—with your hopeless prospects, and with what I may call your family claim on this young fellow—you decide on giving him up, I shall have the pleasure of sending you the balance of your account with me (seven-and-twenty shillings), and shall then be free to devote myself entirely to my own proper business. If, on the contrary, you decide to try your luck at Thorpe-Ambrose, then (there being no kind of doubt that the major's minx will set her cap at the young squire) I should be glad to hear how you mean to meet the double difficulty of inflaming Mr. Arinadale and extinguishing Miss Milroy.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARIÀ OLDERSHAW."

5.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw. (First Answer.)*

“Richmond, Wednesday Morning.

“MRS. OLDERSHAW,—Send me my seven-and-twenty shillings, and devote yourself to your own proper business.

“Yours,
“L. G.”

6.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw. (Second Answer.)*

“Richmond, Wednesday Night.

“DEAR OLD LOVE,—Keep the seven-and-twenty shillings, and burn my other letter. I have changed my mind.

“I wrote the first time, after a horrible night. I write, this time, after a ride on horseback, a tumbler of claret, and the breast of a chicken. Is that explanation enough? Please say Yes—for I want to go back to my piano.

“No; I can't go back yet—I must answer your question first. But are you really so very simple as to suppose that I don't see straight through you and your letter? You know that the major's difficulty is our opportunity as well as I do—but you want me to take the responsibility of making the first proposal; don't you? Suppose I take it in your own roundabout way? Suppose I say—‘Pray don't ask me how I propose inflaming Mr. Armadale and extinguishing Miss Milroy; the question is so shockingly abrupt I really can't answer it. Ask me instead, if it is the modest ambition of my life to become Miss Milroy's governess?’ Yes, if you please, Mrs. Oldershaw—and if you will assist me by becoming my reference.

“There it is for you! If some serious disaster happens (which is quite possible), what a comfort it will be to remember that it was all my fault!

“Now I have done this for you, will you do something for me? I want to dream away the little time I am likely to have left here, in my own way. Be a merciful Mother Oldershaw, and spare me the worry of looking at the Ins and Outs, and adding up the chances For and Against, in this new venture of mine. Think for me, in short, until I am obliged to think for myself.

“I had better not write any more, or I shall say something savage that you won't like. I am in one of my tempers to-night. I want a husband to vex, or a child to beat, or something of that sort. Do you ever like to see the summer insects kill themselves in the candle? I do, sometimes. Good-night, Mrs. Jezebel. The longer you can leave me here the better. The air agrees with me, and I am looking charmingly.

“L. G.”

7.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

"Thursday.

" MY DEAR LYDIA,—Some persons in my situation might be a little offended at the tone of your last letter. But I am so fondly attached to you! And when I love a person, it is so very hard, my dear, for that person to offend me! Don't ride quite so far, and only drink half a tumblerful of claret next time. I say no more.

" Shall we leave off our fencing-match and come to serious matters now? How curiously hard it always seems to be for women to understand each other—especially when they have got their pens in their hands! But suppose we try.

" Well, then, to begin with—I gather from your letter that you have wisely decided to try the Thorpe-Ambrose experiment—and to secure, if you can, an excellent position at starting, by becoming a member of Major Mulroy's household. If the circumstances turn against you, and some other woman gets the governess's place (about which I shall have something more to say presently), you will then have no choice but to make Mr. Armadale's acquaintance in some other character. In any case, you will want my assistance; and the first question therefore to set at rest between us, is the question of what I am willing to do, and what I can do, to help you.

" A woman, my dear Lydia, with your appearance, your manners, your abilities, and your education, can make almost any excursions into society that she pleases, if she only has money in her pocket and a respectable reference to appeal to in cases of emergency. As to the money, in the first place. I will engage to find it, on condition of your remembering my assistance with adequate pecuniary gratitude, if you win the Armadale prize. Your promise so to remember me, embodying the terms in plain figures, shall be drawn out on paper by my own lawyer; so that we can sign and settle at once when I see you in London.

" Next, as to the reference. Here, again, my services are at your disposal—on another condition. It is this: that you present yourself at Thorpe-Ambrose, under the name to which you have returned, ever since that dreadful business of your marriage—I mean your own maiden name of Gwilt. I have only one motive in insisting on this; I wish to run no needless risks. My experience, as confidential adviser of my customers, in various romantic cases of private embarrassment, has shown me that an assumed name is, nine times out of ten, a very unnecessary and a very dangerous form of deception. Nothing could justify your assuming a name but the fear of young Armadale's detecting you—a fear from which we are fortunately relieved by his mother's own conduct in keeping your early connection with her a profound secret from her son, and from everybody.

"The next, and last, perplexity to settle, relates, my dear, to the chances for and against your finding your way, in the capacity of governess, into Major Milroy's house. Once inside the door, with your knowledge of music and languages, if you can keep your temper, you may be sure of keeping the place. The only doubt, as things are now, is whether you can get it.

"In the major's present difficulty about his daughter's education, the chances are, I think, in favour of his advertising for a governess. Say he does advertise, what address will he give for applicants to write to? There is the real pinch of the matter. If he gives an address in London, good-by to all chances in your favour at once; for this plain reason, that we shall not be able to pick out his advertisement from the advertisements of other people who want governesses, and who will give them addresses in London as well. If, on the other hand, our luck helps us, and he refers his correspondents to a shop, post-office, or what not, at *Thorpe-Ambrose*, there we have our advertiser as plainly picked out for us as we can wish. In this last case, I have little or no doubt—with me for your reference—of your finding your way into the major's family circle. We have one great advantage over the other women who will answer the advertisement. Thanks to my inquiries on the spot, I know Major Milroy to be a poor man; and we will fix the salary you ask at a figure that is sure to tempt him. As for the style of the letter, if you and I together can't write a modest and interesting application for the vacant place, I should like to know who can?

"All this, however, is still in the future. For the present, my advice is—stay where you are, and dream to your heart's content, till you hear from me again. I take in *The Times* regularly; and you may trust my wary eye not to miss the right advertisement. We can luckily give the major time, without doing any injury to our own interests; for there is no fear, just yet, of the girl's getting the start of you. The public reception, as we know, won't be ready till near the end of the month; and we may safely trust young Armidale's vanity to keep him out of his new house until his flatterers are all assembled to welcome him. Let us wait another ten days at least before we give up the governess notion, and lay our heads together to try some other plan.

"It's odd, isn't it, to think how much depends on this half-pay officer's decision? For my part, I shall wake every morning, now, with the same question in my mind. If the major's advertisement appears, which will the major say—*Thorpe-Ambrose*, or London?

"Ever, my dear Lydia,

"Affectionately yours,

"MARIÀ OLDERSHAW."

CHAPTER II.

ALLAN AS A LANDED GENTLEMAN.

EARLY on the morning after his first night's rest at Thorpe-Ambrose, Allan rose and surveyed the prospect from his bedroom window, lost in the dense mental bewilderment of feeling himself to be a stranger in his own house.

The bedroom looked out over the great front door, with its portico, its terrace and flight of steps beyond, and, farther still, the broad sweep of the well-timbered park to close the view. The morning mist nestled lightly about the distant trees ; and the cows were feeding sociably, close to the iron fence which railed off the park from the drive in front of the house. "All mine !" thought Allan, staring in blank amazement at the prospect of his own possessions. "Hang me if I can beat it into my head yet. All mine !"

He dressed, left his room, and walked along the corridor which led to the staircase and hall ; opening the doors in succession as he passed them. The rooms in this part of the house were bedrooms and dressing-rooms—light, spacious, perfectly furnished ; and all empty, except the one bedchamber next to Allan's, which had been appropriated to Midwinter. He was still sleeping when his friend looked in on him, having sat late into the night writing his letter to Mr. Brock. Allan went on to the end of the first corridor, turned at right angles into a second, and, that passed, gained the head of the great staircase. "No romance here," he said to himself, looking down the handsomely-carpeted stone stairs into the bright modern hall. "Nothing to startle Midwinter's fidgety nerves in this house." There was nothing indeed ; Allan's essentially superficial observation had not misled him for once. The mansion of Thorpe-Ambrose (built after the pulling down of the dilapidated old manor-house) was barely fifty years old. Nothing picturesque, nothing in the slightest degree suggestive of mystery and romance, appeared in any part of it. It was a purely conventional country-house—the product of the classical idea filtered judiciously through the commercial English mind. Viewed on the outer side, it presented the spectacle of a modern manufactory trying to look like an ancient temple. Viewed on the inner side, it was a marvel of luxurious comfort in every part of it, from basement to roof. "And quite right, too," thought Allan, sauntering contentedly down the broad, gently-graduated stairs. "Deuce take all mystery and romance ! Let's be clean and comfortable—that's what I say."

Arrived in the hall, the new master of Thorpe-Ambrose hesitated, and looked about him, uncertain which way to turn next. The four reception-rooms on the ground floor opened into the hall, two on either side. Allan tried the nearest door on his right hand at a venture, and found himself in the drawing-room. Here the first sign of life appeared, under

life's most attractive form. A young girl was in solitary possession of the drawing-room. The duster in her hand appeared to associate her with the domestic duties of the house ; but at that particular moment she was occupied in asserting the rights of nature over the obligations of service. In other words, she was attentively contemplating her own face in the glass over the mantelpiece.

"There ! there ! don't let me frighten you," said Allan, as the girl started away from the glass, and stared at him in unutterable confusion. "I quite agree with you, my dear : your face is well worth looking at. Who are you?—oh, the housemaid. And what's your name? Susan, eh? Come! I like your name to begin with. Do you know who I am, Susan? I'm your master, though you may not think it. Your character? Oh, yes! Mrs. Blanchard gave you a capital character. You shall stop here; don't be afraid. And you'll be a good girl, Susan, and wear smart little caps and aprons and bright ribbons, and you'll look nice and pretty, and dust the furniture, won't you?"

With this summary of a housemaid's duties, Allan sauntered back into the hall, and found more signs of life in that quarter. A man-servant appeared on this occasion, and bowed, as became a vassal in a linen jacket, before his liege lord in a wide-awake hat.

"And who may you be?" asked Allan. "Not the man who let us in last night? Ah, I thought not. The second footman, eh? Character? Oh, yes; capital character. Stop here, of course. You can valet me, can you? Bother valeting me! I like to put on my own clothes, and brush them, too, when they are on; and, if I only knew how to black my own boots, by George I should like to do it! What room's this? Morning-room, eh? And here's the dining-room, of course. Good heavens, what a table! it's as long as my yacht, and longer. I say—by-the-by, what's your name? Richard, is it?—well, Richard, the vessel I sail in is a vessel of my own building? What do you think of that? You look to me just the right sort of man to be my steward on board. If you're not sick at sea—oh, you are sick at sea? Well, then, we'll say nothing more about it. And what room is this? Ah, yes; the library, of course—more in Mr. Midwinter's way than mine. Mr. Midwinter is the gentleman who came here with me last night; and mind this, Richard, you're all to show him as much attention as you show me. Where are we now? What's this door at the back? Billiard-room and smoking-room, eh? Jolly. Another door! and more stairs! Where do they go to? and who's this coming up? Take your time, ma'am; you're not quite so young as you were once—take your time."

The object of Allan's humane caution was a corpulent elderly woman, of the type called "motherly." Fourteen stairs were all that separated her from the master of the house : she ascended them with fourteen stoppages and fourteen sighs. Nature, various in all things, is infinitely various in the female sex. There are some women whose personal qualities reveal the Loves and the Graces ; and there are other women

whose personal qualities suggest the Perquisites and the Grease Pot. This was one of the other women.

"Glad to see you looking so well, ma'am," said Allan, when the cook, in the majesty of her office, stood proclaimed before him. "Your name is Gripper, is it? I consider you, Mrs. Gripper, the most valuable person in the house. For this reason, that nobody in the house eats a heartier dinner every day than I do. Directions? Oh, no; I've no directions to give. I leave all that to you. Lots of strong soup, and joints done with the gravy in them — there's my notion of good feeding, in two words. Steady! Here's somebody else. Oh, to be sure—the butler! Another valuable person. We'll go right through all the wine in the cellar, Mr. butler; and if I can't give you a sound opinion after that, we'll persevere boldly, and go right through it again. Talking of wine—hullo! here are more of them coming upstairs. There! there! don't trouble yourselves. You've all got capital characters, and you shall all stop here along with me. What was I saying just now? Something about wine; so it was. I'll tell you what, Mr. butler, it isn't every day that a new master comes to Thorpe-Ambrose; and it's my wish that we should all start together on the best possible terms. Let the servants have a grand jollification downstairs, to celebrate my arrival; and give them what they like to drink my health in. It's a poor heart, Mrs. Gripper, that never rejoices, isn't it? No; I won't look at the cellar now: I want to go out, and get a breath of fresh air before breakfast. Where's Richard? I say, have I got a garden here? Which side of the house is it? That side, eh? You needn't show me round. I'll go alone, Richard, and lose myself, if I can, in my own property."

With those words Allan descended the terrace-steps in front of the house, whistling cheerfully. He had met the serious responsibility of settling his domestic establishment to his own entire satisfaction. "People talk of the difficulty of managing their servants," thought Allan. "What on earth do they mean? I don't see any difficulty at all." He opened an ornamental gate leading out of the drive at the side of the house; and, following the footman's directions, entered the shrubbery that sheltered the Thorpe-Ambrose gardens. "Nice shady sort of place for a cigar," said Allan, as he sauntered along, with his hands in his pockets. "I wish I could beat it into my head that it really belongs to me."

The shrubbery opened on the broad expanse of a flower-garden, flushed bright in its summer glory by the light of the morning sun. On one side an archway, broken through a wall, led into the fruit-garden. On the other, a terrace of turf led to ground on a lower level, laid out as an Italian garden. Wandering past the fountains and statues, Allan reached another shrubbery, winding its way apparently to some remote part of the grounds. Thus far, not a human creature had been visible or audible anywhere; but, as he approached the end of the second shrubbery, it struck him that he heard something on the other side of the foliage.

He stopped and listened. There were two voices speaking distinctly—an old voice that sounded very obstinate, and a young voice that sounded very angry.

"It's no use, Miss," said the old voice. "I mustn't allow it, and I won't allow it. What would Mr. Armadale say?"

"If Mr. Armadale is the gentleman I take him for, you old brute!" replied the young voice, "he would say, 'Come into my garden, Miss Milroy, as often as you like, and take as many nosegays as you please.'"

Allan's bright blue eyes twinkled mischievously. Inspired by a sudden idea, he stole softly to the end of the shrubbery, darted round the corner of it, and, vaulting over a low ring-fence, found himself in a trim little paddock, crossed by a gravel walk. At a short distance down the walk stood a young lady, with her back towards him, trying to force her way past an impenetrable old man, with a rake in his hand, who stood obstinately in front of her, shaking his head.

"Come into my garden, Miss Milroy, as often as you like, and take as many nosegays as you please," cried Allan, remorselessly repeating her own words.

The young lady turned round, with a scream; her muslin dress, which she was holding up in front, dropped from her hand, and a prodigious lapful of flowers rolled out on the gravel walk.

Before another word could be said, the impenetrable old man stepped forward, with the utmost composure, and entered on the question of his own personal interests, as if nothing whatever had happened, and nobody was present but his new master and himself.

"I bid you humbly welcome to Thorpe-Ambrose, sir," said this ancient of the gardens. "My name is Abraham Sage. I've been employed in the grounds for more than forty years; and I hope you'll be pleased to continue me in my place."

So, with vision inexorably limited to the horizon of his own prospects, spoke the gardener—and spoke in vain. Allan was down on his knees on the gravel walk, collecting the fallen flowers, and forming his first impressions of Miss Milroy from the feet upwards. She was pretty; she was not pretty—she charmed, she disappointed, she charmed again. Tried by recognized line and rule, she was too short, and too well-developed for her age. And yet few men's eyes would have wished her figure other than it was. Her hands were so prettily plump and dimpled, that it was hard to see how red they were with the blessed exuberance of youth and health. Her feet apologized gracefully for her old and ill-fitting shoes; and her shoulders made ample amends for the misdemeanour in muslin which covered them in the shape of a dress. Her dark grey eyes were lovely in their clear softness of colour, in their spirit, tenderness, and sweet good humour of expression; and her hair (where a shabby old garden hat allowed it to be seen) was of just that lighter shade of brown which gave value by contrast to the darker beauty of her eyes. But these attractions passed, the little attendant blemishes and imperfections of this self-contra-

dicty girl began again. Her nose was too short, her mouth was too large, her face was too round, and too rosy. The dreadful justice of photography would have had no mercy on her ; and the sculptors of classical Greece would have bowed her regretfully out of their studios. Admitting all this, and more, the girdle round Miss Milroy's waist was the girdle of Venus, nevertheless—and the pass-key that opens the general heart was the key she carried, if ever a girl possessed it yet. Before Allan had picked up his second handful of flowers, Allan was in love with her.

"Don't! pray don't, Mr. Armadale!" she said, receiving the flowers under protest, as Allan vigorously showered them back into the lap of her dress. "I am so ashamed! I didn't mean to invite myself in that bold way into your garden; my tongue ran away with me—it did indeed! What can I say to excuse myself? Oh, Mr. Armadale, what must you think of me!"

Allan suddenly saw his way to a compliment, and tossed it up to her forthwith, with the third handful of flowers.

"I'll tell you what I think, Miss Milroy," he said, in his blunt, boyish way. "I think the luckiest walk I ever took in my life was the walk this morning that brought me here."

He looked eager and handsome. He was not addressing a woman worn-out with admiration, but a girl just beginning a woman's life—and it did him no harm, at any rate, to speak in the character of master of Thorpe-Ambrose. The penitential expression on Miss Milroy's face faintly melted away : she looked down, demure and smiling, at the flowers in her lap.

"I deserve a good scolding," she said. "I don't deserve compliments, Mr. Armadale—least of all from *you*."

"Oh, yes, you do!" cried the headlong Allan, getting briskly on his legs. "Besides, it isn't a compliment; it's true. You are the prettiest — I beg your pardon, Miss Milroy! *my* tongue ran away with me that time."

Among the heavy burdens that are laid on female human nature, perhaps the heaviest, at the age of sixteen, is the burden of gravity. Miss Milroy struggled—tittered—struggled again—and composed herself for the time being.

The gardener, who still stood where he had stood from the first, immovably waiting for his next opportunity, saw it now, and gently pushed his personal interests into the first gap of silence that had opened within his reach since Allan's appearance on the scene.

"I humbly bid you welcome to Thorpe-Ambrose, sir," said Abraham Sage; beginning obstinately with his little introductory speech for the second time. "My name —"

Before he could deliver himself of his name, Miss Milroy looked accidentally in the horticulturist's pertinacious face—and instantly lost her hold on her gravity beyond recall. Allan, never backward in following a

boisterous example of any sort, joined in her laughter with right goodwill. The wise man of the gardens showed no surprise, and took no offence. He waited for another gap of silence, and walked in again gently with his personal interests, the moment the two young people stopped to take breath.

"I have been employed in the grounds," proceeded Abraham Sage, irrepressibly, "for more than forty years——"

"You shall be employed in the grounds for forty more, if you'll only hold your tongue and take yourself off!" cried Allan, as soon as he could speak.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the gardener, with the utmost politeness, but with no present signs either of holding his tongue or of taking himself off.

"Well?" said Allan.

Abraham Sage carefully cleared his throat, and shifted his rake from one hand to the other. He looked down the length of his own invaluable implement, with a grave interest and attention; seeing apparently, not the long handle of a rake, but the long perspective of a vista, with a supplementary personal interest established at the end of it. "When more convenient, sir," resumed this immovable man, "I should wish respectfully to speak to you about my son. Perhaps it may be more convenient in the course of the day? My humble duty, sir, and my best thanks. My son is strictly sober. He is accustomed to the stables, and he belongs to the Church of England—without encumbrances." Having thus planted his offspring provisionally in his master's estimation, Abraham Sage shouldered his invaluable rake, and hobbled slowly out of view.

"If that's a specimen of a trustworthy old servant," said Allan, "I think I'd rather take my chance of being cheated by a new one. You shall not be troubled with him again, Miss Milroy, at any rate. All the flower-beds in the garden are at your disposal—and all the fruit in the fruit-season, if you'll only come here and eat it."

"Oh, Mr. Armadale, how very, very kind you are. How can I thank you?"

Allan saw his way to another compliment—an elaborate compliment, in the shape of a trap, this time.

"You can do me the greatest possible favour," he said. "You can assist me in forming an agreeable impression of my own grounds."

"Dear me! how?" asked Miss Milroy, innocently.

Allan judiciously closed the trap on the spot in these words:—"By taking me with you, Miss Milroy, on your morning walk." He spoke—smiled—and offered his arm.

She saw the way, on her side, to a little flirtation. She rested her hand on his arm—blushed—hesitated—and suddenly took it away again.

"I don't think it's quite right, Mr. Armadale," she said, devoting

herself with the deepest attention to her collection of flowers. "Oughtn't we to have some old lady here? Isn't it improper to take your arm until I know you a little better than I do now? I am obliged to ask; I have had so little instruction; I have seen so little of society—and one of papa's friends once said my manners were too bold for my age. What do you think?"

"I think it's a very good thing your papa's friend is not here now," answered the outspoken Allan; "I should quarrel with him to a dead certainty. As for society, Miss Milroy, nobody knows less about it than I do; but if we *had* an old lady here, I must say, myself, I think she would be uncommonly in the way. Won't you?" concluded Allan, imploringly offering his arm for the second time. "Do!"

Miss Milroy looked up at him sidelong from her flowers. "You are as bad as the gardener, Mr. Armadale!" She looked down again in a flutter of indecision. "I'm sure it's wrong," she said, and took his arm the instant afterwards, without the slightest hesitation.

They moved away together over the daisied turf of the paddock, young and bright and happy, with the sunlight of the summer morning shining cloudless over their flowery path.

"And where are we going to, now?" asked Allan. "Into another garden?"

She laughed gaily. "How very odd of you, Mr. Armadale, not to know, when it all belongs to you! Are you really seeing Thorpe-Ambrose this morning for the first time? How indescribably strange it must feel! No, no; don't say any more complimentary things to me just yet. You may turn my head if you do. We haven't got the old lady with us; and I really must take care of myself. Let me be useful; let me tell you all about your own grounds. We are going out at that little gate across one of the drives in the park, and then over the rustic bridge, and then round the corner of the plantation—where do you think? To where I live, Mr. Armadale; to the lovely little cottage that you have let to papa. Oh, if you only knew how lucky we thought ourselves to get it!"

She paused, looked up at her companion, and stopped another compliment on the incorrigible Allan's lips.

"I'll drop your arm," she said coquettishly, "if you do! We were lucky to get the cottage, Mr. Armadale. Papa said he felt under an obligation to you for letting it, the day we got in. And I said I felt under an obligation, no longer ago than last week."

"You, Miss Milroy!" exclaimed Allan.

"Yes. It may surprise you to hear it; but if you hadn't let the cottage to papa, I believe I should have suffered the indignity and misery of being sent to school."

Allan's memory reverted to the half-crown that he had spun on the sun-table of the yacht, at Castletown. "If she only knew that I had *baorded* up for it!" he thought, guiltily.

"I daresay you don't understand why I should feel such a horror of going to school," pursued Miss Milroy, misinterpreting the momentary silence on her companion's side. "If I had gone to school in early life—I mean at the age when other girls go—I shouldn't have minded it now. But I had no such chance at the time. It was the time of mamma's illness and of papa's unfortunate speculations; and as papa had nobody to comfort him but me, of course I stayed at home. You needn't laugh; I was of some use, I can tell you. I helped papa over his troubles, by sitting on his knee after dinner, and asking him to tell me stories of all the remarkable people he had known when he was about in the great world, at home and abroad. Without me to amuse him in the evening, and his clock to occupy him in the daytime——"

"His clock?" repeated Allan.

"Oh, yes! I ought to have told you. Papa is an extraordinary mechanical genius. You will say so, too, when you see his clock. It's nothing like so large, of course, but it's on the model of the famous clock at Strasbourg. Only think, he began it when I was eight years old; and (though I was sixteen last birthday) it isn't finished yet! Some of our friends were quite surprised he should take to such a thing when his troubles began. But papa himself set that right in no time; he reminded them that Louis the Sixteenth took to lock-making when *his* troubles began—and then everybody was perfectly satisfied." She stopped, and changed colour confusedly. "Oh, Mr. Armadale," she said, in genuine embarrassment this time, "here is my unlucky tongue running away with me again! I am talking to you already as if I had known you for years! This is what papa's friend meant when he said my manners were too bold. It's quite true; I have a dreadful way of getting familiar with people, if——" She checked herself suddenly, on the brink of ending the sentence by saying, "if I like them."

"No, no; do go on!" pleaded Allan. "It's a fault of mine to be familiar, too. Besides, we *must* be familiar; we are such near neighbours. I'm rather an uncultivated sort of fellow, and I don't know quite how to say it; but I want your cottage to be jolly and friendly with my house, and my house to be jolly and friendly with your cottage. There's my meaning, all in the wrong words. Do go on, Miss Milroy; pray go on!"

She smiled and hesitated. "I don't exactly remember where I was," she replied. "I only remember I had something I wanted to tell you. This comes, Mr. Armadale, of my taking your arm. I should get on so much better, if you would only consent to walk separately. You won't? Well, then, will you tell me what it was I wanted to say? Where was I before I went wandering off to papa's troubles and papa's clock?"

"At school!" replied Allan, with a prodigious effort of memory.

"Not at school, you mean," said Miss Milroy; "and all through you. Now I can go on again, which is a great comfort. I am quite serious,

Mr. Armadale, in saying that I should have been sent to school, if you had said No when papa proposed for the cottage. This is how it happened. When we began moving in, Mrs. Blanchard sent us a most kind message from the great house, to say that her servants were at our disposal, if we wanted any assistance. The least papa and I could do, after that, was to call and thank her. We saw Mrs. Blanchard and Miss Blanchard. Mrs. was charming, and Miss looked perfectly lovely in her mourning. I'm sure you admire her? She's tall and pale and graceful—quite your idea of beauty, I should think?"

"Nothing like it," began Allan. "My idea of beauty at the present moment—"'

Miss Milroy felt it coming, and instantly took her hand off his arm.

"I mean I have never seen either Mrs. Blanchard or her niece," added Allan, precipitately correcting himself.

Miss Milroy tempered justice with mercy, and put her hand back again.

"How extraordinary that you should never have seen them!" she went on. "Why, you are a perfect stranger to everything and everybody at Thorpe-Ambrose! Well, after Miss Blanchard and I had sat and talked a little while, I heard my name on Mrs. Blanchard's lips, and instantly held my breath. She was asking papa if I had finished my education. Out came papa's great grievance directly. My old governess, you must know, left us to be married just before we came here, and none of our friends could produce a new one whose terms were reasonable. 'I'm told, Mrs. Blanchard, by people who understand it better than I do,' says papa, 'that advertising is a risk. It all falls on me, in Mrs. Milroy's state of health, and I suppose I must end in sending my little girl to school. Do you happen to know of a school within the means of a poor man?' Mrs. Blanchard shook her head—I could have kissed her on the spot for doing it. 'All my experience, Major Milroy,' says this perfect angel of a woman, 'is in favour of advertising. My niece's governess was originally obtained by an advertisement, and you may imagine her value to us when I tell you that she lived in our family for more than ten years.' I could have gone down on both my knees and worshipped Mrs. Blanchard then and there—and I only wonder I didn't! Papa was struck at the time—I could see that—and he referred to it again on the way home. 'Though I have been long out of the world, my dear,' says papa, 'I know a highly-bred woman and a sensible woman when I see her. Mrs. Blanchard's experience puts advertising in a new light—I must think about it.' He has thought about it, and (though he hasn't openly confessed it to me) I know that he decided to advertise, no later than last night. So, if papa thanks you for letting the cottage, Mr. Armadale, I thank you, too. But for you, we should never have known darling Mrs. Blanchard; and but for darling Mrs. Blanchard, I should have been sent to school."

Before Allan could reply, they turned the corner of the plantation,

and came in sight of the cottage. Description of it is needless ; the civilized universe knows it already. It was the typical cottage of the drawing-master's early lessons in neat shading and the broad pencil touch—with the trim thatch, the luxuriant creepers, the modest lattice-windows, the rustic porch, and the wicker birdcage, all complete.

"Isn't it lovely ?" said Miss Milroy. "Do come in !"

"May I ?" asked Allan. "Won't the major think it too early ?"

"Early or late, I'm sure papa will be only too glad to see you."

She led the way briskly up the garden path, and opened the parlour door. As Allan followed her into the little room, he saw, at the further end of it, a gentleman sitting alone at an old-fashioned writing-table, with his back turned to his visitor.

"Papa ! a surprise for you !" said Miss Milroy, rousing him from his occupation ; "Mr. Armadale has come to Thorpe-Ambrose ; and I have brought him here to see you."

The major started—rose, bewildered for the moment—recovered himself immediately, and advanced to welcome his young landlord, with hospitable outstretched hand.

A man with a larger experience of the world, and a finer observation of humanity than Allan possessed, would have seen the story of Major Milroy's life written in Major Milroy's face. The home-troubles that had struck him were plainly betrayed in his stooping figure, and his wan, deeply-wrinkled cheeks, when he first showed himself on rising from his chair. The changeless influence of one monotonous pursuit and one monotonous habit of thought was next expressed in the dull, dreamy self-absorption of his manner and his look while his daughter was speaking to him. The moment after, when he had roused himself to welcome his guest, was the moment which made the self-revelation complete. Then there flickered in the major's weary eyes a faint reflection of the spirit of his happier youth. Then there passed over the major's dull and dreamy manner a change which told unmistakably of social graces and accomplishments, learned at some past time in no ignoble social school. A man who had long since taken his patient refuge from trouble in his one mechanical pursuit ; a man only roused at intervals to know himself again for what he once had been. So revealed, to all eyes that could read him aright, Major Milroy now stood before Allan, on the first morning of an acquaintance which was destined to be an event in Allan's life.

"I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Armadale," he said, speaking in the changelessly quiet subdued tone peculiar to most men whose occupations are of the solitary and monotonous kind. "You have done me one favour already, by taking me as your tenant, and you now do me another by paying this friendly visit. If you have not breakfasted already, let me waive all ceremony on my side, and ask you to take your place at our little table."

"With the greatest pleasure, Major Milroy, if I am not in the way,"

replied Allan, delighted at his reception. "I was sorry to hear from Miss Milroy that Mrs. Milroy is an invalid. Perhaps, my being here unexpectedly; perhaps the sight of a strange face —"

"I understand your hesitation, Mr. Armadale," said the major; "but it is quite unnecessary. Mrs. Milroy's illness keeps her entirely confined to her own room.—Have we got everything we want on the table, my love?" he went on, changing the subject so abruptly that a closer observer than Allan might have suspected it was distasteful to him. "Will you come and make tea?"

Miss Milroy's attention appeared to be already pre-engaged: she made no reply. While her father and Allan had been exchanging civilities, she had been putting the writing-table in order, and examining the various objects scattered on it with the unrestrained curiosity of a spoilt child. The moment after the major had spoken to her, she discovered a morsel of paper hidden between the leaves of the blotting-book, snatched it up, looked at it, and turned round instantly, with an exclamation of surprise.

"Do my eyes deceive me, papa?" she asked. "Or were you really and truly writing *the advertisement* when I came in?"

"I had just finished it," replied her father. "But, my dear, Mr. Armadale is here—we are waiting for breakfast."

"Mr. Armadale knows all about it," rejoined Miss Milroy. "I told him in the garden."

"Oh, yes!" said Allan. "Pray, don't make a stranger of me, major! If it's about the governess, I've got something (in an indirect sort of way) to do with it too."

Major Milroy smiled. Before he could answer, his daughter, who had been reading the advertisement, appealed to him eagerly, for the second time.

"Oh, papa," she said, "there's one thing here I don't like at all! Why do you put grandmamma's initials at the end? Why do you tell them to write to grandmamma's house in London?"

"My dear! your mother can do nothing in this matter, as you know. And as for me (even if I went to London), questioning strange ladies about their characters and accomplishments is the last thing in the world that I am fit to do. Your grandmamma is on the spot; and your grandmamma is the proper person to receive the letters, and to make all the necessary inquiries."

"But I want to see the letters myself," persisted the spoilt child. "Some of them are sure to be amusing—"

"I don't apologize for this very unceremonious reception of you, Mr. Armadale," said the major, turning to Allan, with a quaint and quiet humour. "It may be useful as a warning, if you ever chance to marry and have a daughter—not to begin, as I have done, by letting her have her own way."

Allan laughed, and Miss Milroy persisted.

"Besides," she went on, "I should like to help in choosing which letters we answer, and which we don't. I think I ought to have some voice in the selection of my own governess. Why not tell them, papa, to send their letters down here—to the post-office or the stationer's, or anywhere you like? When you and I have read them, we can send up the letters we prefer to grandmamma; and she can ask all the questions, and pick out the best governess, just as you have arranged already, without leaving me entirely in the dark, which I consider (don't you, Mr. Armadale?) to be quite inhuman. Let me alter the address, papa—do, there's a darling!"

"We shall get no breakfast, Mr. Armadale, if I don't say Yes," said the major, good-humouredly. "Do as you like, my dear," he added, turning to his daughter. "As long as it ends in your grandmamma's managing the matter for us, the rest is of very little consequence."

Miss Milroy took up her father's pen, drew it through the last line of the advertisement, and wrote the altered address with her own hand as follows:—

"Apply, by letter, to M., Post-office, Thorpe-Ambrose, Norfolk."

"There!" she said, bustling to her place at the breakfast-table. "The advertisement may go to London now; and, if a governess *does* come of it, oh, papa, who, in the name of wonder, will she be?—Tea or coffee, Mr. Armadale? I'm really ashamed of having kept you waiting. But it is such a comfort," she added, saucily, "to get all one's business off one's mind before breakfast!"

Father, daughter, and guest sat down together sociably at the little round table—the best of good neighbours and good friends already.

Three days later, one of the London news-boys got *his* business off his mind before breakfast. His district was Diana Street, Pimlico; and the last of the morning's newspapers which he disposed of, was the newspaper he left at Mrs. Oldershaw's door.

The present Position of Landscape Painting in England.

It would be difficult to say much more than has been said by Mr. Ruskin on the modern tendency to Landscape Painting: Any one who touches on this theme must re-arrange, collect, and criticize what he has scattered up and down his works. In comparing our arts with those of the Greeks and Romans, and indeed with those of the mediæval and Renaissance periods, we cannot but perceive how much of our attention is directed to inanimate nature. The ancients were occupied with the affairs of civil life almost exclusively. The passions, sentiments, and thoughts of men seemed to them the only fitting subjects of art. Nor did they regard the outer world, except as conducing to the luxuries and comforts of daily life. The beauty of mountain, sea, and sunlight they no doubt appreciated, but they did not care to represent it as it stood before them. Every fact of nature became humanized before the Greeks admitted it within the pale of art. It was not the river, or the tree, or the cloud they sought to reproduce; but the god of streams, the Dryad, and the master of the clouds. With these personages the Greeks could sympathize. A divine being, not very different in kind from himself, was always present to a Greek. The notion of personality in God, in nature, and in man so filled his intellect that it left room for none beside. Very little of this sentiment remains to us. Our monotheistic religion, and the dogma of the creation, have entirely destroyed the belief in deities of woods, and waves, and mountains. Spiritual conceptions have supplanted the concrete forms of Greek mythology, and art has sought to represent subjects of a more reflective and less external character. We have little power over sculpture, but music, poetry, and landscape painting flourish.

Again, the beauty of man was always prominent to the Greeks in their gymnastic grounds, in the dances and processions of their religious festival, and on the plains of Elis, where all Hellas met to watch the contests of her athletes. To the development of the body they paid an almost exclusive attention. Gymnastics constituted the whole education of a Spartan youth, and the music which Plato added to this training consisted for the most part in a cultivation of harmonious sentiments, and of an æsthetical enjoyment of the beautiful. Modern society in this respect has placed upon quite a different footing. Instead of seeing the human form constantly bare before us, and of rejoicing by experience and by sympathy in the loveliness and strength of well-trained limbs, to uncover the person is considered a disgrace, and mediæval Christianity has taught us an almost total contempt for the flesh. Our clumsy clothing, and the awkwardness of our movements, distract attention from the beauty of man, and leave it free to occupy itself with other kinds of natural grace.

Again, it must be remembered that every man of Greece and Rome had political and military interests, which absorbed his activity, and prevented him from becoming self-engrossed in meditation, or in merely private matters. Each individual citizen was of vast importance to the state when wars were frequent and the families from which the soldier and the statesman came were few. In modern days the size of nations relieves each individual from those responsibilities which weighed upon a citizen of Greece or Rome. The business of public life is not sufficient to exercise the faculties of all the cultivated classes. There remains a large body of men who have to seek within themselves the object of their interest, and to whom politics presents no attractions. Hence solitude of soul, and introspection, and the melancholy which loves to be alone with nature, have a place in modern psychology. A morbid sense of isolation results, which has been admirably depicted by Goethe in his Faust. This character, to classic thinkers, would have seemed unreal and monstrous in the last degree. They would have shrunk from its unhealthy self-analysis and constant brooding over private pains. But in modern society it has a deep and far-spread truth. It represents a condition of human life which is almost universal, and which constitutes the special gravity of modern, as distinct from ancient modes of thought. The vast importance of the individual in the face of nature and of God is here asserted. "Faust, in the anguish of his scepticism, looking at the moonlight, longs to be far off upon the hills, or on the meadows, and to bathe his pain away in mingled light and dew. When passion is struggling with the sense of duty in his soul, he seeks the mountains. We find him among trees and caverns, listening to the tempest and endeavouring to lose his human troubles in the contemplation of eternal nature. Again, after the catastrophe of Margaret's episode it is among the fields, and pines, and waterfalls of Switzerland that Faust recruits his shattered strength."

Nature is always made the antidote of human ills. Its peace contrasts with our unrest, its unbroken continuity with our changefulness, the order of its recurring seasons with our chaotic history, the durability of its powers with our ephemeral lease of life, its calm indifference with our fretfulness and intolerance of pain. Shakespeare, in his play of *As You Like It*, has expressed this aspect of modern sentiment with regard to nature. The lyrics "Under the greenwood tree," and "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," most delicately point the contrast we have tried to draw. But since the days of Shakespeare the love of natural beauty has increased and been developed. He, and the men of his time, cared for the colours, and the sounds, and the freshness of the outer world with the keen sensibilities of youth. Man was still upturned in their thoughts. They loved the earth as a pleasure-ground in which he passed his time. The idea of nature as a vast power—instinct with divinity, from which the human soul, in solitude, might draw great thoughts and inspirations—had not yet occurred to them. They did not find in landscape a mirror of their own emotions, or transfer the feelings of humanity to inanimate objects.

This kind of pantheistic reverence has grown up of late years

Rousseau led to it by the doctrine which he preached of returning to a state of nature. In the old age of feudal civilization men imagined a golden period of youth, before the growth of statecraft and class prerogatives. Naked savage life appeared to them, half throttled by the chains and bandages of centuries, to be the true condition of the human race. And when the throes which shook Europe, destroying the old forms of social order, had produced a scepticism in the hearts of many, Nature and her undisturbed repose became the only refuge for them, in the tumult of the world. Removing their faith from man, and from the god of his imagination, they reposed it in Nature, and in the spirit that controlled the elements. In England, Wordsworth became the high-priest of this creed. Shelley, and Keats, and Coleridge, each in his own way, contributed to render it permanent and influential over thought. The point in which they all agreed, was reverence for Nature as the source of intellectual enjoyment and moral instruction. They were not content with the slight attention which had been paid to her more superficial aspects by preceding poets. They ransacked her deeper secrets, dwelling alone with her, exercising their powers of observation on the minutest incidents, and making pictures from hitherto neglected scenes. Man, in truth, had descended from the high tower of his humanity, whence he had been wont to cast a careless and half-patronizing eye upon the hills and pastures that surrounded him. From that time forward he has learned to recognize that not only are men interesting to mankind, but that also in the world itself there is a dignity and loveliness which he must study with humility and patience. This is a great lesson, the whole value of which has hardly yet been recognized. But the progress of the age in physical science, and in the facilities of locomotion, tend to make it every day more widely felt. The more we know of the universe, as revealed to us by chemistry, geology, astronomy, and all our other instruments of discovery, the less we boast that man is the centre of all things. The world and its immensity necessarily occupy our thoughts more duly than in days when wars and politics and metaphysical discussion filled the minds of men. And while we traverse new countries to satisfy our curiosity, or for the sake of health and pleasure, the various objects of natural interest presented to our eyes, explained by science, or admired for their intrinsic beauty, must extend our observation, and distract our cares from petty griefs and from the sense of personal importance.

The highest claims of landscape painting rest upon the promptitude with which it has arisen to satisfy, to lead, to strengthen, to instruct, and to immortalize these modern tendencies of human intellect. It is a new form of art, because the want from which it springs is new; because the phase of life to which it is adapted has so recent an origin. The Greeks, and the Italians of the Renaissance, did not need it, since they were occupied with the beauty of man. They lived in the two boyhoods and spring-times of the world; but when the bloom of youth had passed away, and reflection led the mind from man to nature, landscape

then began—at first feebly, as an adjunct to figure painting, then timidly asserting for itself an independent sphere, and lastly, in our days, rising to the dignity of an original fine art in which the spirit of the age reflects itself no less distinctly than in music and in poetry.

If we are now able to see why landscape painting has assumed so prominent a place among the arts of modern times, it may be well to ask ourselves what special aim and scope it has, and to review the conditions under which it flourishes in our own country. The object of all art is truth of representation. "The first and last thing required of genius is love of truth," said Goethe. "To hold the mirror up to nature" is another maxim which applies to art. We expect from the artist a faithful transcript of the truth in nature. The more of this truth given, the greater is the art. As a sculptor represents the human form, with human thoughts and passions shining through its beauty, so in landscape painting the artist seeks to show us scenes of natural sublimity and loveliness, with nature's moods depicted on their features. The expression, without which a face is dead and meaningless, may be compared to the "effects" of landscape painting. The greatest artist is he who can depict most powerfully the fleeting smiles of sunlight and of vapour, the lowering menaces of gathering tempests, and all those transitory aspects and rare conditions of the atmosphere which must be studied, waited for, observed, and remembered. The artist stands between nature and the men around him. It is his duty to make them see what they have not seen before, to make them feel what they have not felt, and think what they have not thought. His eyes are constantly fixed upon the beauties of the world, while theirs are bent upon the common things of life. He must select for them the worthiest objects of their contemplation, and exhibit these under the most favourable aspects, so as to draw forth their hidden loveliness and make most prominent those qualities which constitute their dignity. By so doing he will cultivate faculties of observation in many minds which have been dead to all the influences of the outer world. It is only through the medium of pictures that some people have come to care for nature. And all of us are alive to the advantage of possessing portraits of historic scenes which we can never visit, or of realms of beauty which supply our fancy with new loveliness to feed upon. Thus fresh sources of interest are continually being opened up. The education which before consisted in a painful effort to understand conditions widely different from our own, is rendered less difficult. We see before us what we read about. And the thoughts and feelings of other races and of other ages are interpreted to our imagination by familiarity with the natural scenery proper to their development. No one who is alive to the influences of climate and physical circumstance in forming national character will depreciate the value of this "local colouring" procured for us by landscape. Nor is it less delightful to possess some portion of familiar beauty constantly before our eyes. The fields which we have known, the flowers which we have loved, by painting are secured to us from the mutabilities of time.

We carry pieces of the country into our London homes, and, sitting in our room, may traverse cities of the past, desert sands, and "the unfooted sea;" or turn to dwell with interest upon the hedgerows, nests, and primroses of England. If, as we have tried to prove, there is an innate love in modern hearts for nature, no picture that patiently and truthfully reveals her character will seem too small and insignificant. Wordsworth has drawn true poetry and a deep moral from the simplest plant that grows. And this should be the painter's aim. As a priest of Nature, he must recognize her power in every form, from the lineaments of men down to the outlines of the meanest herb.

It has been well said that every picture ought to be a painted poem. For poetry is truth appealing to the intellect, reflected from it, and partaking of the thoughts and feelings of mankind. To be true poetry it must excite the imagination, and connect itself with sympathies that are universal in the world. It stands midway between reality and thought. Poetry has well been called "the beautiful investiture of fact." In this sense a picture is half an idea, and half a thing. To give in words or forms a full description of any natural object would be impossible. The mind must select; and the process of selection resolves itself into a representation of mental impressions. Whatever conduces to the vividness and completeness of the impression renders the poem more exact and true. But multitudes of details foisted in, observed with undue reference to their individual importance, and copied with neglect of the main purpose of the work in hand, disturb the conception. Unity and the controlling intellect are necessary for a work of art. Plato, when describing a good essay, compared it to an animal. He meant that it should be an organic whole, dominated by some central thought, and cohering in such a way that the abstraction or addition of any important part would mar its symmetry. And this metaphor may be applied to every work of art. We often hear people say that some landscape is well copied from a beautiful scene, but that it does not make a picture. It has too much or too little in it. You cannot trace its meaning. Your eye does not rest upon some central fact to which all others are subordinate. In the same way we might condemn a poem which called itself an idyll, or a picture of life, because an episode distracted our attention from the current of the story, or because the author had turned aside to talk of flowers when great interests were at stake. It would be useless for the artist to exclaim, "I saw things as I painted them;" or for the poet to answer that the story as he heard it first was encumbered with extraneous incidents. We should reply, "So it might have been in nature and in life; but what we want in art is some one object for our contemplation, some choice piece of beauty, some instructive thought. Your intellect was not enough at work. You painted everything you saw before you. You did not paint the one impression which it made upon your mind, and carefully avoid all matters that might interfere with its transmission to your fellow-men."

Furthermore, a poem must contain some idea. And this includes the

question of how far landscapes can be made the vehicles of thought and feeling. It is clear that, in order to make them play this part, some human sentiment must be connected with the scenes they represent. The earliest landscape painters sought to give their pictures interest by placing a group of persons in the foreground, engaged in some suggestive occupation. Thus Claude filled up his pastorals with shepherds, and with dances under trees, while Salvator Rosa peopled the gloomy caverns and dark chestnut woods he loved to paint, with bandits and soldiers. Rubens, in the celebrated landscape of the Pitti Gallery at Florence, has painted the story of Ulysses landing after his shipwreck on the shores of Phæacia beneath the palaces and gardens of Alcinous. The storm is broken over-head ; vast rain-clouds rolling off remind us of the tempest that is gone. The figure of Ulysses on the shore suggests the fury of the sea from which he has escaped, while Nausicaa and her maidens seem to welcome him to fresh sunlight and repose. The correspondence between returning calm in nature and the escape of the hero from his perils on the sea, produce a unity of conception that makes this picture a fine poem. Many of Turner's greatest works might be taken as examples of the same sympathy between the scene in nature and the fortunes of some hero or historic personage. But the landscape painter need not depend so immediately as in the cases we have cited upon human interest. He may indicate it even in a more subordinate degree. Perhaps the most generally attractive of Turner's pictures is the "Fighting Temeraire." This painting teems with objects and associations that provoke the warmest sympathy ; and yet the human life there represented is entirely in the background. The sun is setting over the sea, while the crescent moon stands cold and clear to eastward. Between the sunset and the moonlight a black steamer-tug is drawing an old ship of war to her last resting-place. The sun is going down, and night is coming on ; but the red beams of the evening fall upon the steamer, while the white rigging and gigantic hull of the veteran ship look spectral in the pale light of the moon. The pathos of this picture depends upon the sympathy which it excites in us for the vast, helpless man-of-war. Men have always felt a personal attachment to their ships. Argo was respected as a kind of goddess, and Catullus wrote a sonnet to his favourite skiff. Equally in modern times are battleships regarded as actual personalities by the men who fight in them.

But, again, it is possible to make a poem in landscape from even simpler elements. The mind of man serves for nature's mirror, but it cannot reflect her scenes precisely as they are. They waken some feelings in his heart which he endeavours to transfer to canvas, in connection with the forms and colours that excited them. We all know how calm, solemnity, and rest are associated with sunset, and how sunrise produces different emotions of a more active and joyous character. This is the simplest instance which can be found of human feeling inseparably connected with external scenes. To a painter, these associations by long communing in solitude with nature become more intense in degree and more varied in kind. Every mood of mind, grave, gay, sublime, languid, tender, or

impassioned, receives its echo in some phase of natural beauty. These he paints, and these it is the critic's and spectator's task to read. Of course these different animating ideas cannot be of a very complex or multiform description. Like the thoughts which music represents, the themes of landscape must be simple and confined within a narrow sphere. But they admit of exquisite gradations and the most delicate expression. In a summer afternoon, such as Giorgione painted, we find peace, the peace of pensive contemplation. Alter the tone, make it gayer and less rich, then a fresh kind of peace suggests itself, less majestic and luxurious than the calm of the Venetian's thought, more commonplace and fit for daily uses. Sunsets over broad flat lands; a promontory running out into a cloudy sky, with waves beneath, and seagulls wheeling at its base; a solitary ship at sunrise; cypress-trees or poplars bent by winds, beside a ruined tower—strike different notes of loneliness and melancholy. Branches dashed together in the forest, or surf strewn with spars chafing against stones, tell us of strife and anguish, danger and unrest. In sunlight on broad meadows we see plenty and content, recalling days of quiet toil, and harvests crowned with happiness. It seems superfluous to spend more time in such illustrations of the poetical thoughts which may be conveyed through landscape painting. Association governs all the actions of our mind, and if the artist but feels strongly, and expresses to the best of his ability what he has felt, his work can scarcely fail to be of value. It is only to the greatest men that high poetic inspiration is vouchsafed. They must stand alone. Their intuitions into nature, whether expressed in form and colour as by Turner, or in music as by Beethoven, or in words as by Shelley, are the highest utterances of art. But the priesthood of the beautiful has many ranks; and it is the painter's privilege that, even though he do not stand among the poets of the world, he yet can embody in his works those emotions which vast numbers feel, which few can express in words, and which, from their purity, universality, and nobleness, are truly poetical.

Though we have dwelt upon the poetry which every picture ought to aim at, many valuable works may be produced which can be estimated only as clear and lucid descriptions of scenery and natural objects. So much has been said respecting the place and purposes of "topographical" painting by Mr. Ruskin, and by the able author of a *Painter's Camp in the Highlands*, that we need not enter into a further discussion of its merits. A good critic will always discern the picture which aims at nothing more than topographical exactitude. But it is not an uncommon fault of people who pretend to criticize our exhibitions, that they class pictures almost entirely by reference to their subject, awarding higher praise to some transcript of grand scenery, which is simply a good map, than they bestow upon the less striking and more unobtrusive subject, which has passed through the mind of an imaginative man, and by his thought has been elevated into poetry. We wish, still, to confine attention to the imaginative style of landscape painting. Speaking generally, we may discern two great classes into which this style divides itself. The one is

contented with broad and simple effects of colour, and of light and shade, deliberately sacrificing all minor details in order to produce a picture which shall stimulate the imagination, and not fatigue it by the effort of minute attention. David Cox is the chief representative of this style. His work gives unfailing pleasure to those who have a knowledge of art and vivid fancy. It is full of suggestions. It rouses our imagination in the same agreeable way as sketches and designs by the great masters do. Much is left to be conceived and filled in by the spectator. This communicates a sense of activity to his intellect, and makes him feel himself to be a fellow-worker with the artist, in the effect produced upon him. But great as this style may become in the hands of an artist like Cox, it cannot be considered the highest sphere of landscape painting. The other, and in our opinion the greater school, aims at a more downright rendering of actual fact. It neglects no characteristic detail, since every accessory may in itself be suggestive, and contribute to the general effect. Pictures of this order cannot be understood at a glance. They require attention, and repay it by the new beauties which may constantly be found in them. Turner is the chief master of this style. In his works we see that he has sought to give the most perfect realization of the object which he studied, and at the same time to communicate to us the impression which it made on him. The greatest landscape painting is that which is fullest, which represents most, so long as every detail be subordinate to one dominant conception. Therefore, in considering his subject, the artist should not neglect the geological features, the vegetation, the character of the soil, the trees, the animal life, the cultivation, the houses, and the people—everything, in short, which may render his portrait of the scene complete. He should pay especial attention to weather, for upon the changes of the sky depend those effects which we before compared to expression in the human countenance. In this minute and patient labour he will follow the steps of the greatest masters, of Tintoretto, Titian, Raphael, and Velasquez; nor need he be afraid of the scorn which has been thrown on the pre-Raphaelistic school for forcing every detail on our attention with equal power. Since it must be remembered that all pictures which commit this error are entirely wrong in their ideal of art. The cardinal rule that cannot be too much insisted on is this:—That detail is only valuable in so far as it builds up a single and characteristic scene. Any fact which is superfluous, or which strikes a note at all discordant with the keynote of the picture, must be ruthlessly discarded, however beautiful. The neglect of this rule has led the pre-Raphaelites often into error. But their failure must not deter painters from the true road to the loftiest ends of art.

We may now turn from a consideration of the scope and aims of landscape painting to review the present state of its appreciation in our country. Whatever may be said about the rank which different styles of painting ought to take, landscape is clearly the most genuine production of the present century. We have been far surpassed in figure painting by the great masters of Italy. Sculpture can hardly be said to exist, so feeble are its achievements in our day; but landscape has attained a

dignity and a power in England to which all efforts of all other schools have only been the prelude. But though this art has such important claims upon our sympathy, full justice has not yet been done it. The system of classifying styles of painting into high and low tends to mislead our judgment. Newspaper critics always speak in terms of disappointment of an exhibition where there is much landscape, and regret the grand old days of figure painting. No doubt the greatest grasp of intellect, and the deepest comprehension of human interests are exhibited in producing such works as those of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Their value, as the means of education, inasmuch as they display the passions, thoughts, attempts, achievements, and aspirations of humanity, far transcends that of any landscape paintings. We might as well compare Wordsworth's studies of nature with Shakspeare's plays, as place Turner on a par with Raphael. Both are good, but the kind is different. We must look for excellence in each, and to weigh them in the scales against one another is mere nonsense. Besides, it must be remembered that at the present day we have no Raphaels or Shakspeares to distract attention from our Turners and Wordsworths. It is more honourable to produce original works of an excellence which has been never equalled in some narrow sphere of art, than to strive in vain for ever to ascend those heights which have been climbed before us by a race of giants. What we have to do, if we must follow out this line of criticism, is to compare the landscapes of our day with the figure pictures of our day, and to judge which style of art has, *after its own kind*, succeeded best. We have no hesitation in giving the palm to landscape painting; but, in order to appreciate its beauty, we require some special education, trained habits of attention, familiarity with nature, and knowledge of the difficulties of art. The painter strives to copy nature. With him *ars est celare artem*. And when he has produced some careful, temperate, and studied work, the uncultivated critic says:—"Any one can imitate what he sees. I saw just such a landscape yesterday. Give me imagination, loftiness, and power." As very few people care for the beauty of poetry and music, there are few who really love nature. What most of us seek among the Alps is air and exercise and novelty; and very few indeed have eyes to see, or memories to recollect, the finest scenes which they have visited. Their impressions pass away from them, and nothing is left behind. It is natural that landscape painting should be tedious, unintelligible, and insignificant to critics of this class. But every one can appreciate figure painting. Here we have a story, a glimpse of life, something with which our own nature renders us familiar. Most men are dubious about mountains, trees, and the colours of the sky or sea, but every one thinks that he can judge a face. Is it pretty or ugly, rare or common? What does it say? What is that man telling to the woman with the fan? To read expression is our daily task, and the outward gestures of the body we can interpret from experience; but to understand the significance of a landscape requires more natural susceptibility to form and colour and composition—more interest

in beauty for its own sake, and a truer love of art and nature. Therefore, though we believe that cultivated people take a genuine delight in landscape painting, it follows that the ignorant and those who have a smattering of knowledge gained from histories of art, quote the verdict of Sir Joshua Reynolds in dispraise of landscape, and exalt themselves by fancying their taste too lofty to admire its trivial charms. Setting aside the higher claims of landscape painting, the difficulties it meets and conquers may reasonably be adduced in its defence. The grandest things in nature must be painted from memory. Her effects are evanescent, and the impressions stamped by them upon the painter's mind must be so vivid as to remain there and to reproduce themselves, when wanted, with reality. This implies vast powers of memory, long study, and complete command over the materials of art. He who has the greatest knowledge of natural facts, and the most vigorous imagination, will succeed best. The figure painter can get more help from his models than the marine or landscape painter from his studies. The one can recur again and again to nature, the other has seen once, and sees no more, the phase of loveliness which first suggested to his mind the picture. We do not, of course, mean to deny that the difficulties of the artist who imagines some dramatic scene, and paints (as he must do) the passions of its characters from memory, are greater far.

Landscape painting in oil, which must be considered the highest branch of this art, has hardly had a fair chance of influencing the public during the past ten years. The tendency has been to swamp all other exhibitions of oil painting in the Royal Academy, while the space which the Royal Academy commands for its exhibitions remains the same. Before we proceed to consider the treatment which landscape painting there receives, it will be well to review rapidly the history of other establishments for the display of pictures. The British Institution is so badly managed, that all our best painters who are not Academicians have ceased to send their pictures there. No law, whatever, seems to regulate the hanging, whence it follows that the exhibition has grown worse and worse. Those artists whose works are not of the vulgar and flashy style which predominates in the British Institution, are afraid to expose pictures refined in colour, and remarkable for no violent contrasts of light and shadow, to the neighbourhood of coarse and gaudy paintings. Landscapes are especially damaged by the "killing" contiguity of brilliant *ad capandum* pictures; for their effect depends upon their truth and subtlety of colour. This is not so much the case with figure subjects. Their greatest qualities may still be seen when the beauty of their colouring has partially been lost. But a fine landscape among bad pictures must be ruined. Turner used to say that his drawings would be "killed" if exhibited at the Water Colour Exhibition. These remarks may be applied with equal force to the Society of British Artists. This institution was founded with a royal charter, and regulations closely modelled upon those of the Royal Academy, to supply room for the pictures of those artists who, for want of space, could not exhibit on the walls of the Academy. Soon after its

formation, the Academy, finding that it would be a formidable rival, passed a rule that no painter should be eligible to election as Associate who belonged to any society of artists. The working of this rule has brought the Society down to its present low level, and our best artists of established reputation, as well as the young rising men, have almost ceased to exhibit there. We must add, however, that the rule in question was last year rescinded in consequence of the Parliamentary Commission on the Royal Academy. Another exhibition of oil pictures at the Portland Gallery, in Regent Street, came to an end about two years ago. It was formed on the plan of exhibitors paying for hanging space, their pictures first being subjected to the approval of a committee. This scheme answered well for a time. The exhibition proved a great help to young painters, especially to landscape painters, and some of the finest landscapes of late years have been exhibited in the Portland Gallery after their rejection by the British Institution and the Academy. However, as the members and the exhibitors could not work well together, and the public did not patronize the exhibition, it expired. The failure of these various institutions has increased the pressure of pictures on the Royal Academy, so that its want of space has been severely felt, and in the bitterness of disappointment the justice of its verdicts has been called in question. If success be a proof of superiority, the Royal Academy stands still highest; nor are we prepared to join in any blame which may be thrown upon a society that has flourished independently for years, and has produced so many noble and illustrious painters. Still, it must be admitted, that landscape painting suffers more than other styles of art from the small accommodation which the rooms of the Academy afford. While figure pictures have still the chance of being hung according to their merits, landscapes are being gradually excluded, or placed in positions so unfavourable as to render them invisible. It is better not to be exhibited at all than to be hoisted up beneath the skylight. Last year only four landscapes, by outsiders, were hung upon the line, excepting one or two little scraps a few inches long. The reason for this neglect must be sought, first, in the fact that figure pictures draw more shillings than landscapes do, for reasons which we have explained above; and, secondly, that a prejudice still clings against the style as being lower in the scale of art. We have already combated this objection, but it is one which cannot fail to have weight with judges trained in the traditions of high art. If we examine the list of Royal Academicians, we shall find that only two painters of *pure* landscape—Creswick and Cooke—have been elected during the last five-and-twenty years. It would be ridiculous to suppose that some effects should not proceed from these causes, though we do not mean to cast the least suspicion on the Royal Academy itself. Landscape is a new thing in the annals of art, and academies are proverbially conservative of rules, observances, authorities, and formulæ.

But be this as it may, the combination of influences which we have endeavoured to describe has proved most prejudicial to our school of landscape painters in oils. The younger men, feeling that they have no

chance of showing what they can achieve, become dispirited, and paint small pictures to attract purchasers. The larger works on which they might have spent both energy and knowledge remain unpainted, because they know that, if produced, they are not likely to be hung. Several of our most promising landscape painters have abandoned oil for water colour from the same despair. This cannot but be looked upon as a misfortune, since, without depreciating water colour, the greatest things are only possible in oils. Oil can represent everything better than water, except, perhaps, a very dark middle distance, and some effects of luminous haze. These effects have as yet been only imitated in oils with success by forcing strong colours and decided masses of dark upon the foreground, which is Linnell's method. The difficulty of getting air and space in oils is greater than in water colours, in so far as they are more dependent upon quality of colouring. Still, when the end has been achieved, success is glorious. In every other respect, the method of oil painting is far superior to any other. It affords scope for more downright and real imitation—for more laboured and conscientious effort. Oil painters never fail to aim at, and accomplish, much more in their pictures than can fall within the province of the water-colourist. In order to test the truth of this remark, it is only necessary to visit the Old Water Colour Exhibition after that of the Royal Academy. Then we see how much smaller is the demand made upon our intelligence in the former than in the latter. Indeed, the very popularity of water colours depends upon the greater ease with which they can be understood, and also on the practical acquaintance with this method possessed by many persons. It would be a serious injury to art if our water-colour school of landscape painting were to fail; but the injury will be far greater if this school absorb the colourists in oils. Water-colour painting would suffer in itself without the stimulus of emulation to achieve, as far as possible, the more perfect realization of the other method. Yet such an event may be anticipated with some show of reason, unless during the years to come more public justice is awarded to landscapes in oil, or unless the space for exhibition is extended.

This brings us round again to the chief point of difficulty, the narrow room of the Academy. With their present accommodation the utmost desire to do justice would fail. What we want in England are halls as large as those of the new Pinacothek at Munich, or of the Brera at Milan, where pictures, good, bad, and indifferent, are hung with philosophical respect for the proverbially tender feelings of the artist world. At a time when the South Kensington Museum is drawing large sums from the nation, it would scarcely be but fair to place a wider ground for exhibition at the disposal of an institution which has done so much and has received so little. The National Gallery is over-crowded. The Academy requires more space. Burlington House is still unoccupied, except by a scientific society, which could not be unfavourable to the arts. But whether in a year or two our native talent will be better able to display itself, is still an unsettled question.

Monsieur Babou.

1.

In the immediate vicinity of the capital of the kingdom of Lilliput there is a charming village called "Les Grenouillettes." This rural resort of the citizens of Mildendo consists, mainly, of three hotels, thirty public-houses, and five ponds. The population I should reckon at about ten millions, inclusive of frogs, who are the principal inhabitants, and who make a great noise in the world there.

Hither flock the jocund burgesses, and dance to the sound of harp and viol. . . .

It occurs to me that, sprightly as I may think it to call Belgium Lilliput, the mystification might possibly become tiresome and inconvenient if persisted in throughout this narrative, besides being absolutely unnecessary. As for the village in question, I have a reason or two for not calling it by its right name.

About half a dozen years ago, my brother (Captain John Freshe, R.N.), his wife, and I had been wearily jogging all a summer's day in search of country lodgings for a few weeks, in the immediate neighbourhood of Brussels. Now nothing can be more difficult to find in that locality, except under certain conditions.

You can live at a village hotel, and pay a maximum price for minimum comfort.

You can, possibly, lodge in a public-house, where it will cost you dear, however little you pay.

Or you can, in some villages, hire empty rooms in an entirely empty house, and hire furniture from Brussels, and servants, if you have none, by the month.

This last alternative has the advantage of ennobling your position into a quasi-martyrdom, by, in a measure, compelling you to stay where you are, whether you like it or not.

Towards the end of that longest of the long days, we began to regard life and circumstance with the apathy of despair, and to cease to hope for anything further from them except dinner.

The capital of the kingdom of Lilliput appeared to be partially surrounded by a vast and melancholy campagna of turnips. These wilds immeasurably spread, seemed lengthening as we went. Village after village had we reached, and explored in vain. Judging by our feelings, I should say we had ransacked at least half-a-hundred of those rural colonies. Almost all these villages possessed at least six public-houses and two

ponds. Some few had no ponds, but all had six public-houses. Rural, dusty, cracked public-houses; with frowzy gardens, with rotten, sloppy tables and benches; with beery gorillas playing at quoits and ninepins.

The names of none of these settlements seemed to us pronounceable by human beings, with the exception of two, which sounded like Diggum and Hittumontheback. But our city driver appeared to be acquainted with the Simian tongue, and was directed from village to village by the good-natured apes whom he interrogated.

About sunset we came to a larger and quite civilized place, with a French name, signifying "The Tadpoles;" the place I have described at the commencement of this narrative. Our dusty fly and dejected horse turned into the carriage entrance of the first little hotel we saw. It stood sideways to a picturesque little lake, with green shores. The carriage entrance went through the house. Beyond, we had caught sight of a paved yard or court, and of a vista of green leafiness that looked cool and inviting. We heard the noisy jangling of a barrel-organ playing a polka, and we found a performance going on in the court that absorbed the attention of the whole household. No one seemed to hear, or at least to heed, the sound of our wheels, but when our vehicle fairly stopped in the paved yard, a fishy-eyed waiter came towards us, jauntily flipping time with his napkin. We begged him to get us dinner instantly.

"Way, Mosou," replied that official, in the sweet Belgian-French language, and let us out of the fly. We had been so long cramped up in it, that we were glad to walk, and stand, and look about the court while our food was got ready.

The organ-grinder had not ceased grinding out his polka for a moment. The wiry screams of his infernal machine seemed to charm him as much as they did the rest of the company assembled. He was the usual Savoyard with a face like a burnt crust; all fire-brown eyes, tangle ringlets, and insane grimace. He leaned against a low stone post, and ground out that horrible bray, like a grinning maniac. We walked to a short distance, and took in the scene.

A little sallow young man, having a bushy moustache, stood near a door into the house, with a dish in his hand, as if he had been transfixed in the act of carrying it somewhere. Beside him, on the step of the door, sat a blonde young woman, with large blue eyes and a little mouth—as pretty and as *fête* as a Carlo-Dolcian Madonna. Evidently these were the landlord and his lady.

On a garden-bench, by the low wall that divided the court from the garden beyond, sat, a little apart, a young person of a decidedly French aspect, dressed quite plainly, but with Parisian precision, in black silk. In her hand and on her lap lay some white embroidery. She was not pretty, but had neat small features, that wore a pleasant though rather sad smile, as she suspended her work to watch what was going on. An old woman in a dark-blue gown and a clean cap, with a pile of freshly-ironed linen in her arms, stood at the top of some steps leading into

a little building which was probably the laundry. She was wagging her old head merrily to the dance tune. Other lookers-on lounged about, but some of them had vanished since our arrival; for instance, the fishy-eyed waiter, and a burly individual in a white nightcap.

The centre of attraction remains to be described. Within a few paces of the organ-grinder, a little girl and boy danced indefatigably on the stones, to the unmusical music of his box.' The little boy was a small, fair, sickly child, in a linen blouse, and about four years old. He jumped, and stamped, and laughed excitedly. The little girl looked about a year older. She was plump and rosy, dressed in a full pink frock and black silk apron. She had light brown hair, cut short and straight, like a boy's. She danced very energetically, but solemnly, without a smile on her wee round mouth. She poussetted, she twirled—her pink frock spread itself out like a parasol. Her fat little bare arms akimbo, she danced in a gravely coquettish, thoroughly business-like way; now crossing, changing places with her partner; now setting to him, with little pattering feet; now suddenly whisking and whirling off. The little boy watched her, and followed her lead: she was the governing spirit of the dance. Both children kept admirable time. They were dancing the Tarantella, though they had never heard of it; but of all the poetry of motion, the Tarantella is the most natural measure to fall into.

The organ-grinder ground, and grinned, and nodded; the landlord and his wife exchanged looks of admiration and complacency whenever they could take their eyes off the little dancing nymph: it was easy to see they were her proud parents. The quiet young lady on the bench looked tenderly at the tiny, sickly boy, as he frisked. We felt sure she was his mother. His eyes were light blue, not hazel; but he had the same neat little features.

All of a sudden, down from an open window looking into the court, there came an enormous voice—

"Ah, ah! Bravo! Ah, ah, Monsieur Babébibo-BOU!"

The little boy stopped dancing; so did the little girl, and every one looked up at the window. The little boy, clapping his hands and screaming with glee, ran under it. No one could be seen at that aperture, but we had caught a momentary glimpse of a big blond man in a blue blouse, who had instantly dropped out of sight, and who was crouching on the floor, for we saw, though the child below could not, the top of his straw hat just above the window-edge. The little boy screamed, "Papa, papa!" The great voice, making itself preternaturally gruff, roared out—

"Qui est là? Est ce par chance Monsieur Babébibo-BOU? (The first syllables very fast, the final one explosive.)

"Way, way! C'est Mosou Babi-BOU!" cried the child, trying to imitate the gruff voice, and jumping and laughing ecstatically.

Out of the window came flying a huge soft ball of many colours, and then another roar: "Avec les compliments du Roi de tous les joujoux, à Monsieur Babébibo-BOU!"

More rapture. Then a large white packet, palpably sugarplums, "Avec les compliments de la Reine de tous les bonbons, à Mademoiselle Marie, et à Monsieur Babébibo-BOU!"

Rapture inexpressible, except by shrill shrieks and capers. The plump little girl gravely advances and assists at the examination of the packet, popping comfits into her tiny mouth with a placid melancholy, which I have often observed in fat and rosy faces.

Meanwhile, the organ-grinder has at last stopped grinding, has lowered his box, and is eating a plateful of cold meat and bread which the old woman has brought out to him. The landlord and his wife have disappeared. The young Frenchwoman on the garden-bench has risen, and come towards the children; and now, from a door-way leading into the house, issues the big blond man we caught a momentary glimpse of at the window.

The little boy abandons the sugarplums to his playfellow, and crying—"Papa! papa!" darts to the new comer, who stoops and gathers him up to his broad breast, in his large arms and hands, kissing him fondly and repeatedly. The child responds with like effusion. The father's great red face, with its peaked yellow beard, contrasts, touchingly somehow, with the wee pale phiz of his little son. The child's tiny white puds pat the jolly cheeks and pull the yellow beard. Then the man in the blouse sets his son carefully on the ground, and kisses the young Frenchwoman who stands by.

The big man has evidently been absent awhile from his family. "How goes it, my sister?" says he.

"Well, my brother," she answers quietly. "Thou hast seen Auguste dance. Thou hast seen how well, and strong, and happy he is—the good God be thanked."

"And after Him, thee, my good sister," says the big man, affectionately.

We had been called in to dinner by this time, but the open window of our eating-room looked into the court close to where the group stood. We observed that Mademoiselle Marie had remained sole possessor of the packet of sweets; and that the little boy, content to have got his papa, made no effort to assert his rights in them. The big papa interceded, saying, "Mais, mais, la petite . . . Give at least of the bonbons to thy comrade. It is only fair."

"Let her eat them, Jean," put in his sister, with naïve feminine generosity and justice. "They are so unwholesome for Auguste, sees thou."

The big man laughed, lit his pipe, and the three went away into the little garden, where they strolled, talking in the summer twilight.

We came happily to an anchor here, in this foggy little haven, and finding we could secure, at tolerably moderate charges, the accommodation we required, made up our minds to stay at this little hotel for the few weeks of our absence from Brussels.

II.

NEAT morning we were breakfasting in the garden under a trellis of hop-leaves, when the 'big man' in the blouse came up the gravel-walk, with his small son on his shoulder.

They were making a tremendous noise. The little boy was pulling his father's great red ear; he affected to bellow with anguish, his roaring voice topped by the child's shrill, gleeful treble. We saluted the new comers in a neighbourly manner.

"A beautiful day, Madame," said the big man, in French, taking off his hat and bowing politely to John's wife, at the same time surrounding his son safely with his left arm.

"Madame and these Messieurs are English, is it not?"

"A pretty place," we went on to say, after owning our nationality, "and very pleasant in this hot weather after the glare of Brussels."

"It is that; and I am here as often as possible," returned our new acquaintance. "My sister is staying here for the advantage of this little man. . . . Monsieur Auguste, at your service. Salute then the society, Auguste. You must know he has the pretension to be a little delicate, this young man. An invalid, if you please, consequently his aunt spoils him! It is a ruse on his part, you perceive. Ah, bah! An invalid! My word, he fatigues my poor arm. Ah—h! I cannot longer sustain him. I faint—I drop him—down he goes . . . la—a—à!"

Here, lowering him carefully, as if he were crystal, he pretended to let his son suddenly tumble on a bit of grass-plot.

"At present" (grumbling) "here he is, broken to pieces probably; we shall have the trouble of mending him. His aunt must bring her needle and thread."

Monsieur Auguste was so enchanted with this performance that he encored it ecstatically. His father obeyed, and then sent him off running to call out his aunt to breakfast, which was laid under a neighbouring trellis.

"He is strong on his legs, is it not, Madame?" said the father, looking after him; his jolly face and light blue eyes a little grave, and wistful. "His spirits are so high, see you? He is too intelligent, too intellectual—he has a little exhausted his strength; that says all. He is well enough; he has no malady; and every day he is getting stouter, plainly to the eye."

Here the aunt and nephew joined us. Our new acquaintance introduced her.

"Ma belle-sœur. Ma chère,—Madame, and these Messieurs are English. They are good enough to take an interest in this infant Hercules of ours."

He tossed the child on his shoulder again; established on which throne his little monarch amused himself by ornamenting the parental straw-hat with a huge flaring poppy and some green leaves, beneath which the jocund face bloomed Bacchic.

Meanwhile the quiet young Frenchwoman, smiling affectionately at those playfellows as they went off together, sat down on a chair we offered her, and frankly entered into conversation.

In a few minutes we knew a great deal about this little family. The man in the blouse was a Belgian painter, Jean Baudin, and "well seen in the expositions of Paris and Brussels." "His wife was my sister: we were of Paris. When our little Auguste was born, my poor sister died. She was always delicate. The little one is very delicate. Ah, so delicate, also. It is impossible to be over-careful of him. And his father, who is so strong—so strong! But the little one resembles in every manner his mother. His poor father adores him, as you see. Poor Jean! he so tenderly loved his wife, who died in her first youth. . . . She had but eighteen years—she had six years less than I. In dying she begged me to be to her infant a mother, and to her poor Jean a sister. Jean is a good brother, bon et brave homme. And for the little one, he is truly a child to be adored—judiciously, it is understood, madame: I spoil him not, believe me. But he is clever to astonish you, that child. So spirituel, and then such a tender little good heart—a disposition so amiable. Hardly he requires correction. . . . Auguste! how naughty thou art! Auguste! dost thou hear? Jean! take him then off the dusty wall, and wipe him a little. Mon ami, thou spoilest the child; one must be judicious."

We presently left the garden, and in passing, beheld Monsieur Auguste at breakfast. He was seated between his papa and aunt, and was being adored by both (judiciously and injudiciously) to the heart's content of all three.

We stayed a month at this little hotel at The Tadpoles. The English family soon fraternized with that of Jean Baudin, the Flemish painter, also sojourning there, and the only other resident guests.

John's wife and Mademoiselle became good friends and gossips, and sat at work and chat many a summer hour under the hop trellises. Mademoiselle Rose Leclerc was the Frenchwoman's name, but her name of ceremony was simply "Mademoiselle." John and I used to walk about the country, among the lanes, and woods, and hamlets which diversify the flats on that side of Brussels, accompanying Jean Baudin and his paint-box. We sat under a tree, or on a stone fence, smoking pipes of patience, while Jean made studies for those wonderful, elaborate tiny pictures, the work of his big hands, by which he and his little son lived. I remember, in particular, a mossy old cottage, rough and grey; the front clothed with vines, the quaint long gable running down behind to within a yard of the ground. Baudin sketched that cottage very often; and often used its many picturesque features.

Sometimes it was the rickety, black-timbered porch, garlanded with vine: a sassy, blond-haired young Flemish maiden sat there, and twirled the bobbins on a nice-cushion, in a warm yellow flicker of sunshine. Sometimes Jean went right into the porch and into the cottage itself, and

recently brought us out an old blue-gowned, black-coifed creature, limping as she kicked the grand-babe's clumsy cradle with her clumsy feet;—a ray through the leafy little window-hole found the crone's white hair, and the infant cheek. Honest Jean only painted what he saw with his eyes. He could copy such simple poetry as this, and feel it too, though he could indite no original poems on his canvas pages. He was a hearty good fellow, and we soon got to like him, and his kindly, unpretentious, but not unshrewd, talk—that is, when it could be got off the eternal grooves—which, to say the truth, was seldomer than we (who were not ourselves at that period the parents of prodigies,) may have secretly desired.

In the summer evenings we used to sit in the garden all together, the ladies graciously permitting us to smoke. We liked to set the children dancing again on the grass-plot before us; and I must here confess that my saltated to a mandolin touched by this hand. I had studied the instrument under a ragged maestro of Naples, and flattered myself I performed on it with credit to both, and to the general delight.

Sometimes Jean Baudin would tie to his cane a little pocket-handchief of Monsieur Auguste, and putting this ensign into his hand, use him to go through a certain vocal performance of a martial and plaint character. The pale little man did it with much spirit, and a malignant aspect, stamping fiercely at particular moments of the strain. I can only remember the effective opening of this entertainment. Thus sang—"Les Belges" (at this point the small performer threw up the hat and flag of his country, and shouted *fi*) "SONT BRAVES!!" Uncle and aunt regarded with pride that ferocious champion of his valiant compatriots, looking round to read our astonishment and rapture in our faces.

We all got on excellently with the hotel folk, ingratiating ourselves chiefly by paying a respectful court to the solid and rosy little princess of the house. Jean Baudin painted her, sitting placid, a little open-mouthed, heavy-lidded, over-fed, with a lapful of cherries. We all made much of her and submitted to her. John's wife presented her with a book of English print, of a charming apple-green, out of which the fat face bloomed like a carnation-bud out of its calyx.

The young landlord would bring us out a dish to our garden dinner-table, on purpose that he might linger and chat about England. That country, and some of its model institutions, appeared to excite in his mind a mixture of awe and curiosity, wonder and horror. For instance, he had heard—he did not altogether believe it—(deprecatingly)—that not only were the shops of London closed, with shutters, on the Sunday, but also the theatres; and not only the theatres, but also the expositions, the gardens and salons of dance, of music, of play. How! it was actually the truth?

"Certainly what Madame was good enough to affirm one must believe. But then what do they? No business, no amusement—what then do they, mon Dieu!—"

"They go to church, and read the Bible, and keep the Sabbath day holy," asserts Mrs. Freshe, in perfect good faith, and severely and proudly, as becomes a Protestant Britishwoman.

"Tiens, tiens! But it is triste, that—— Is it not that it is triste, Madame? Tiens, tiens! And this is that which is the Protestantism. Since Madame herself affirms it, one can doubt no longer."

And he goes pondering away, to tell his wife; but I fear with no increased tendency to the reformed faith.

Even Joseph, the stolid and fishy-eyed waiter, patronized us, and gravely did us a hundred obliging services beyond his official duty.

On a certain evening, Mademoiselle, John, John's wife, and I, sat as usual at book or work under the trellises; while the two children, at healthful play, prattled under the shade of the laurel-bushes hard by. As usual, the solid little Flemish maiden was tyrannizing calmly over her playfellow. We constantly heard her small voice, quiet, slow, and dominating: "*Je le veux.*" "*Je ne le veux pas.*" They had for playthings a little handbell and a toy-wagon, and were playing at railways. Auguste was the porter, trundling up, with shrill cries, heavy luggage-trucks piled with gravel, gooseberry skins, tin soldiers, and bits of cork. Marie was a rich and haughty lady about to proceed by the next convoi, and paying an immense sum, in daisies, for her ticket, to Auguste, become a clerk. A disputed point in these transactions appeared to be the possession of the bell; the frequent ringing of which was indeed a principal feature of the performance. Auguste contended hotly, but with considerable show of reason, to this effect:—That the instrument belonged to him, in his official capacities of porter and clerk, rather than to the rich and haughty lady, who as a passenger was not, and could not be, entitled to monopolize the bell of the company. Indeed, he declared himself nearly certain that, as far as his experience went, passengers never did ring it at all. But Marie's "*Je le veux*" settled the dispute, and carried her in triumph, after the crushing manner of her sex, over all frivolous masculine logic.

Mademoiselle sat placid beside us, doing her interminable and elaborate satin-stitch. She was working at a broad white slip, intended, I understood, to form the ornamental base of a petticoat. It was at least a foot wide, of a florid and labyrinthine pattern, full of oval and round holes, which appeared to have been cut out of the stuff in order that Mademoiselle might be at the pains of filling them up again with thready cobwebs. She would often with demure and innocent complacency display this fabric, in its progress, to John's wife (who does not herself, I fancy, excel in satin-stitch), and relate how short a time (four months, I think,) she had taken to bring it so near completion. Mrs. Freshe regarded this work of art with feminine eyes of admiration, and slyly remarked that it was really beautiful enough "*même pour un trousseau.*" At the same time she with difficulty concealed her disapproval of the waste of precious time incurred by the authoress of the petticoat-

border. Not that Mademoiselle could be accused of neglecting the severer forms of her science; such as the construction of frocks and blouses for Monsieur Auguste—adorned, it must be admitted, with frivolous and intricate convolutions of braid. And the exquisite neatness of the visible portions of Monsieur Jean's linen also bore honourable testimony to Mademoiselle's more solid labours.

Into the midst of this peaceful garden-scene entered a new personage. A man of middle height, with a knapsack at his back, came up the gravel-walk: a handsome brown-faced fellow of five-and-thirty, with a big black beard, a neat holland blouse, and a grey felt hat.

Mademoiselle and he caught sight of each other at the same instant.

Both gave a cry. Her rather sallow little face flushed like a rose. She started up; down dropped her petticoat-work; she ran forward, throwing out her hands; she stopped short—shy, and bright, and pretty as eighteen! The man made a stride and took her in his arms.

“Ma Rose! ma Rose! Enfin!” cried he, in a strangled voice.

She said nothing, but hung at his neck, her two little hands on his shoulders, her face on his breast.

But that was only for a moment. Then Mademoiselle disengaged herself, and glanced shamefacedly at us. Then she came quickly up—came to John's wife, slid an arm round her neck, and said rapidly, tremulously, with sparkling, tearful eyes,—

“C'est Jules, Madame. C'est mon fiancé depuis quatre ans. Ah, Madame, j'ai honte—mais,—and ran back to him. She was transformed. In place of that staid, almost old-maidish little person we knew, lo! a bashful, rosy, smiling girl, tripping, skipping, beside herself with happy love! And her little collar was all rumpled, and so were her smooth brown braids. Monsieur Jules took off his felt hat, and bowed politely when she came to us, guessing that he was being introduced. His brown face blushed a little too: it was a happy and honest one, very pleasant to see.

The children had left off playing, and stared wide-eyed at these extraordinary proceedings. Mademoiselle ran to her little nephew, and brought him to Jules.

“I recognize well the son of our poor Lolotte,” said he, softly, lifting and kissing him. “And that dear Jean, where is he?”

Even as he spoke there came a familiar roar from that window overlooking the court-yard, by which the painter sat at his easel almost all day.

“Ohé! Monsieur Ba-Bou!”

The little boy nearly jumped out of his new friend's arms.

“Papa! papa! Laissez-moi, donc, Mosou!—Papa!”

“Is it that thou art by chance this monsieur whom they call?”
inquired Jules, as he put him down.

“Way, way!” cried the little man as he pattered off, with that awful shriek of his. “C'est moi, Mosou Ba-Bou! Ba-Bou!”

“Thou knowest that great voice of our Jean,” said Mademoiselle;

"when he has finished his day's labour he always calls his child like that. Having worked all day for the little one, he goes now to make himself a child to play with him. He calls that to rest himself. And truly the little one idolizes his father, and for him will leave all other playfellows—even me. Come then, Jules, let us seek Jean."

And with a smiling salute to us the happy couple went arm-in-arm out of the garden.

III.

We did not see much of our friends the next day. After their early dinner, Jean came up the garden all alone, to smoke a pipe, and stretch his legs before he returned to his work. We thought his good-natured face was a little sad, in spite of his cheerful *abord*, as he came to our garden parlour and spoke to us.

"It is a pleasure to see them, is it not?" said he, looking after the lovers, just vanishing under the archway of the court-yard, into the sunny village road. Mademoiselle had left off her sober black silk, and floated in the airiest of chintz muslins.

"My good little Rose merits well her happiness. She sent that brave Jules marching four years ago, because she had promised my poor wife not to abandon her helpless infant. Truly she has been the best of little mothers to my Auguste. Jules went away angry enough; but without doubt he must have loved her all the better when he came to reflect. He has been to Italy, to Switzerland, to England—know I where? He is artist-painter, like me—of France always understood. Me, I am Flemish, and very content to be the compatriot of Rubens, of Vandyke. But Jules has very much talent: he paints also the portraits, and has made successes. He is a brave boy, and deserves his Rose."

"Will the marriage take place now, at last?" we ventured to ask.

"As I suppose," answered Jean, his face clouding perceptibly.

"But you will not separate; you will live together, perhaps," suggested John's wife.

"Ah, Madame, how can that be? Jules is of France and I of Belgium. When I married I brought my wife to Brussels; naturally he will carry his to Paris. C'est juste."

"Poor little Auguste will miss his aunt," said John's wife, involuntarily, "and she will hardly bear to leave him, I think."

"Ah, Madame," said Jean, with ever so little bitterness in his tone. "what would you?" The little one must come second now; the husband will be first. Yes, yes, and it is but fair! Auguste is strong now, and I must find him a good bonne. I complain not. I am not so ungrateful. My poor Rose must not be always the sacrifice. She has been an angel to us. See you, she has saved the life of us both. The little one must have died without her, and apparently I must have died without the little one. C'est simple, n'est ce pas?" smiling. Then he gave a sigh, truly

as if he could not repress it, and walked away hastily. We looked after him, compassion in our hearts.

"That little sickly boy will hardly live if his aunt leaves him," said Mrs. Freshe, "*and his father knows it.*"

"But what a cruel sacrifice if she stayed!" said John.

"And can her lover be expected to wait till Auguste has grown up into a strong man?" I put in.

The day after was Sunday. Coming from an early walk, I heard a tremendous clamour, of woe or merriment, proceeding from a small sitting-room that opened into the entrance passage. The door was wide, and I looked in. Jean Baudin was jammed up in a corner, behind a barricade of chairs, and was howling miserably, entreating to be let out. His big sun-browned face was crowned by a white coif made of paper, and a white apron was tied round his great waist over his blue blouse. Auguste and Marie danced about the barricade with shrill screams, frantic with joy.

When Baudin saw me he gave a dismal yell, and piteously begged me to come to his assistance. "See, then, my dear young gentleman, how these bandits, these rebels, these demons, maltreat their poor bonne! Help, help!" and suddenly, with a roar like a small Niagara, he burst out of his prison and took to his heels, round and round the court, and up the garden, the children screaming after him—the noise really terrific. Presently it died away, and he came back to the door-step where I stood, Auguste on his shoulder, and the little maiden demurely trotting after. "At present I am the bonne," said he; "Rose and her Jules are gone to church; so is our hostess. In the meanwhile I undertake to look after the children. Have you ever seen a little bonne more pretty? with my coquette cap and my neat apron—hein?"

That evening the lovers went out in a boat on the great pond, or little lake, at the back of the hotel. They carried Auguste with them. We all went to the water's edge; the rest remained a while, leaning over the rails that partly skirted the parapet wall—except Jean, who strolled off with his tiny sketch-book. A very peaceful summer picture was before us, which I can see now if I shut my eyes—I often see it. A calm and lovely August evening near sunset: a few golden feathers float in the blue sky. Below, the glassy pond that repeats blue sky, red-roofed cottages, green banks, and woody slopes—repeats also the solitary boat rowed by Jules, the three light-coloured figures it contains, and a pair of swans that glide stately after. The little boy is throwing bits of bread or cake to them.

As we stood there and admired this pretty little bright panorama, John's wife observed that the child was flinging himself dangerously forward, in his usual eager, excited way, at every cast he made.

"I wonder," said she, "that his aunt takes no notice; she is so absorbed in talk with Jules she never turns her head. Look! look! A—h!"

A dreadful shriek went up from lake and shore. The poor little

fellow had overbalanced himself, and had gone headlong into the lake. Some one flashed off the parapet wall at the same moment, and struck the water with a splash and a thud. Some one was tearing through it like a steam-engine, towards the boat. It was my brother John. We saw and heard Jules, frantic, and evidently impotent to save; we saw him make a vain clutch at something that rose to the surface. At the same time we perceived that he had scarce power to keep Rose with his left hand from throwing herself into the water.

Hardly three minutes had yet passed, yet half the population seemed thronging to the lake-side, here, where the village skirted it.

And suddenly we beheld a terrible—a piteous sight. A big, bare-headed man, that burst through the people, pale, furious, awful; his teeth set, his light blue eyes flaring. He seemed to crash through the crowd, splintering it right and left, like a bombshell through a wall, and was going crazy and headlong over the parapet into the water. He could swim no more than Jules.

“ Sauvé ! sauvé ! ” cried John’s wife, gripping his hand, and hanging to it, as he went rushing past. “ My husband has found him. See ! see there, Jean Baudin ! He holds up the dear child.”

She could not have kept him back a moment—probably he did not feel her touch; he was only dragging her with him. But his wild eyes, fixed and staring forward, had seen for themselves what he never heard her say.

Fast, fast as one arm could oar him, my brother was bringing Jean his little one, held above water by the other hand. Then that poor huge body swayed and shivered; the trembling hands went out, the face unlooked a little, there came a hoarse sob, and like a thin strangled cry in a dream,—

“ Mon petit ! mon petit ! ”

But strong again, and savage with love, how he snatched the pale little burden from John, and tore up the bank to the hotel. There were wooden back-gates that opened into the court on the lake-side, but which were unused and locked. At one mighty kick they yawned open before Jean, and he rushed on into the house. Here all had been prudently prepared, and the little dripping body was quickly stripped and wrapped in hot blankets. The village doctor was already there, and two or three women. Jean Baudin helped the doctor and the women with a touching docility. All his noisy roughness was smoothed. He tamed his big voice to a delicate whisper. He spoke and moved with an affecting submissive gentleness, watching what there was he could do, and doing it exactly as he was bid. Now and then he spoke a word or two under his breath, “ One must be patient, I know, Monsieur le Médecin ; yes, yes.” And now and then he muttered piteously,—“ Mon petit ! mon petit ! ” But he was as gentle as a lamb, and touchingly eager to be helpful.

In half an hour his pain got the better of him a little.

“ Mais, mon Dieu, mon Dieu ! ” he moaned, “ how I suffer ! Ah,

Monsieur, is it not that he breathes a little, my dear little one? Ah, my God, save me him! Mon petit, mon petit!"

He went into a corner of the room, and stood with his forehead against the wall, his shoulders heaving with silent sobs. Then he came back quiet and patient again.:

"Priez, priez pour moi, Madame," said he, once, to John's wife.

"I am praying without ceasing, my poor friend," said she. And once she hastily laid a handkerchief soaked in essence on his forehead, for she thought he was surely going to faint, when the hope, long, long deferred, began to turn his heart sick.

All this time John and I lingered in the dusky passage, in which that door ajar made a cleft of yellow light. Every now and then a dim figure stole up to us with an eager sad whisper, asking, "How goes it? how goes it?" and slipped away downstairs again with the comfortless answer.

It was poor Jules, who could do nothing for his Rose but this. She had thrown herself on the floor in a darkening room, and lay there moaning. Her dire anguish, sharp as a mother's for the little one, was cruelly and unduly aggravated by self-reproach, and by the self-inflicted agony of her exile from that room upstairs. She dared not enter Jean's presence. She felt that he must for ever abhor the sight of her; she was afraid he might curse her! She rejected all kindness, all sympathy, especially from Jules, whom she quite fiercely ordered to quit her. But when it got quite dark, the poor fellow took in a candle, and set it on a table; and he spent the time in going up and downstairs to fetch her that whisper of news, which, perhaps, he sweetened with a little false hope before he offered it to her.

At last we outside heard a movement—a stifled exclamation; and then one of the women ran out.

"The child has opened his eyes!" said she, as she hurried downstairs for some article required.

Presently we heard a man sobbing softly; and then—yes, a faint tiny voice. And after that—nothing, for a long while. But at last—at last! a miserable awful cry, and a heavy, heavy fall. And then came out John's wife, at sight of whose face we turned sick at heart, and followed her silently downstairs. We knew what had happened: the little one was dead.

He had opened his eyes, and had probably known his father: for the light that his presence always kindled there had come into the little white face. Jean, too ready to clutch the delusive hope, fell a-sobbing with rapture, and kissing the little fair head. The child tried to speak, and did speak, though but once.

"He said, 'Ba-Bou,' quite distinctly," said John's wife, "and then such a pretty smile came; and it's—it's there still, on his little dear dead face, John."

Here she broke down, and went into a passion of tears, sobbing for "poor Jean! poor Jean!"

He had fainted for the first time in his strong life, and so that blessed unconsciousness was deadening the first insupportable agony of his dreadful wound. They carried him out, and laid him on his bed, and I believe the doctor bled him. They hoped he would sleep afterwards from sheer exhaustion.

Presently poor Jules came to us, crying like a child, and begging us to go to his Rose to try to rouse her, if only to make her weep. She had fallen into a dry depth and abyss of despair—an icy crevasse, where even his love could not reach her.

Since she had known the child was dead, she had not stirred, except to resist, moaning, every attempt to lift her from the floor where she had cast herself, and except that she shuddered and repulsed Jules, especially, whenever he went near her.

We went into the room where she lay. My good brother stooped, and spoke to her in his tender, manly fashion, and lifted her, with a resolution to which she yielded, and seated her on a sofa beside his wife, whose kind arms closed round her suffering sister.

And suddenly some one had come in whom Rose could not see, for her eyes were pressed to that womanly bosom. John's wife made a little warning gesture that kept us others silent.

It was poor Jean himself; he came in as if in search of somewhat; he was deadly pale, and perhaps half unconscious what he did. He was without shoes, and his clothes and blond hair and beard were tumbled and disordered—just as when they had laid him on his bed. When he saw Rose, he came straight up to her, and sat down on her other side.

"Ma pauvre Rose," said he, pitifully—

She gave a cry and start of terror, and turned and saw him. The poor fellow's broken heart was in his face; she could not mistake the sweet-natured anguish there. Half bewildered by his inconceivable grief, he had gone to her, instinctively, like a child, for sympathy and comfort.

"Ma pauvre Rose," said he, brokenly; "notre petit——"

Passionately she took his great head between her hands, and drew it down on her bosom, and kissed it—passionately weeping at last.

And we all came out softly, and left them—left them to that Pity which sends us the wholesome agony of such tears.

A Midsummer Ride in South China.

THE comet of July, 1861, was glittering in a starlit sky when the writer of this paper, proceeding on certain business to the interior of the province of Kwang-tung, took a last look back at the Great North Gate of Canton, whence exit had been granted him by the sullen French guard who were constituted a standing garrison and nuisance at that portal. Of the eight gates to the city—which was then occupied by a force of some three thousand British troops, associated with a couple of hundred French marines—seven were garrisoned by detachments from the British regiments, and were kept constantly open for the convenience of the native inhabitants ; but on the part of our gallant allies there existed an evident resolve to compensate the smallness of their force by a considerable amount of pretension and display ; and the French “corps of occupation” cleverly made its otherwise insignificant presence known by closing, double-locking, and refusing to open, under any persuasion other than that of a military pass, the solitary gate which it was their privilege to garrison. My passage was not, however, to be disputed by even the sulkiest of sentries, and I was soon traversing with my party the peaceful expanse of country which, skirted on the right hand by the low line of hills known as the White Cloud range, extends in an otherwise unbroken flat of unctuous rice-lands for a distance of thirty or forty miles from the walls of Canton. My mission now led me to traverse this plain, and to enter the mountain region which forms its northern boundary, constituting the last declivities of the great eastern spurs of the Himalayan range.

A week's ride during the hottest month in China, when the thermometer even at midnight is seldom seen as low as eighty degrees, and when its noonday range is frequently above rather than below the dreadful degree of ninety-five, is not an expedition to be undertaken from choice ; but no matter what may be the discomforts from weather, a feeling of exhilaration is sure to accompany the first outset for a journey on horseback—a feeling which the prosaic modern conveniences for locomotion have now utterly extinguished in all civilized lands. The romance of travel has decidedly fled to those ever-fewer regions where pathless solitudes still exist for Spekes and Burkes to break upon, or where men remain content with the sluggish track-boat or the plodding feet of some hardy quadruped. To these unsophisticated forms of travel I had long been accustomed ; and my hardy mountain pony—the only animal capable of making its way over the rough bridle-paths and narrow granite causeways of Southern China—had carried me many a hundred miles, through storm and shine, in the regions surrounding Canton.

I was now making my first stage by night, in order to lessen, as far as possible, the discomfort arising from the sultry weather. For security's sake, I was attended by a mounted escort from the garrison; and, at the last moment, a welcome companion, in the shape of Captain M——, of the Royal Engineers, had volunteered to share my otherwise somewhat lonely ride. To our mounted party, clattering over the granite flagstones which pave the narrow North Road for some miles from the city gate, came following, in a light mountain-chair of bamboo, carried by three coolies, a mandarin, appointed by the Chinese authorities at Canton to accompany and co-operate with me. It was not the first time we had journeyed together, and our acquaintanceship had already subsisted for years. Unlike the majority of his countrymen, Tse Tung-hao, as he was named, was a man of liberal as well as intelligent mind; and an amount of frankness and honesty was noticeable in him which won the regard of all the Europeans with whom he was brought in contact to a degree that perhaps no other Chinese official has enjoyed.

Our party was completed by two servants, one a follower of the mandarin, the other my own—the faithful A-sing—my *major-domo*, valet, and, on occasions such as these, my cook:—equally excellent in all the varied capacities in which he shone, but especially to be prized whilst roughing it on the march; when, throwing off the dandyism and finicalities which are inseparable, at ordinary times, from the demeanour of a Chinese "boy," he displayed an energy, activity, and willingness, which could only be paralleled by some of those rough Irish "soldier-servants" who are now and then found—and prized—in the army. Of all servants, however, few can be brought in comparison with a really good and well-trained Canton "boy." These neat and orderly lads of eighteen or twenty, trim in dress, respectful in manner, without a tinge of servility, and frequently possessing an education of their own by no means to be despised, constitute the first indispensable adjunct to be acquired by a stranger on his arrival in China; and the "boy," often engaged at random, remains frequently for a score of years in the service of the same employer. Infinitely superior, in activity as in appearance, is the sprightly Canton lad, in his white surplice-like jacket, blue knickerbockers, and dandily-gartered stockings of stone-grey calico, to the slouching, greasy, ill-savour'd Hindoo, who, as *khimtugar*, condescends at Calcutta to discharge about one-tenth part of the duties which are cheerfully assumed by his Chinese congener!

But this, though a favourite topic of mine, must not be allowed to divert us from our proper line of march. The servants, and a long train of baggage-coolies—those veritable impediments to every journey such as this—have been sent on to reach our halting-place before us, and we pursue our march under the shadow of the White Cloud Mountain, along a road rendered lonely through the depredations of the rebels who devastated this province in 1854. Here and there, to right or left, a large village may be recognised by its glimmering lights and the long-

continued yelping of its watch-dogs; but Chinese villages are not fond of highroads passing through their midst, and prefer to draw themselves apart some little distance from the public thoroughfare, so that at night-fall they may bolt and bar their streets, and take what poor precautions they can against the banded robbers who permanently infest most parts of the country. Although, therefore, our course lies through a succession of highly-cultivated lands—the alluvial level dense with the flourishing rice-plant, and the rising grounds carefully turned to account with ground-nut, sweet-potato, and vegetable crops—scarcely a human habitation shows itself, beyond here and there a bamboo tea-shed, whence refreshment of a very humble kind is dispensed at all hours to the travellers who pass along this road. At one point, where a granite bridge spans a stream that issues, brawling, from the gloomy side of the adjoining range, a ghastly memorial of the recent troubles hangs alone in the moonlight. A pole erected at the foot of the bridge supports a cage, fastened in which is a human head, once, as declared by an inscription beneath it, that of a native of the adjoining village, recently captured among the rebel ranks. Here for months the warning trophy had hung exposed, and no pitying relative had come forward, bold enough to snatch this relic of his village kinsman from its place of infamy, and to give it decent burial.

Trotting gaily enough over the bridge, we continued our course through the nightly shadows of the hills, which, projected by the moon rising behind them to the eastward, fell in great fantastic promontories and gloomy stretches of thick darkness on the silent country. For miles at a time we yielded to the influence of the hour, and pursued our course without a sound from either party. Then, again, the charm broken by some sudden observation, a further distance was whiled away in lively chat. Occasionally, as my pony ambled along beside the chair in which my mandarin friend was stoutly borne by his untiring coolies, our conversation fell into his favourite grooves—the wonders of Europe, the dangers of the seas, and his own misfortunes in failing to obtain more rapid advancement. The comet, then so brightly visible, was a source of apprehension to Tse, and upon it also he loved to discourse. Intelligent as he was, he fully shared the superstitions of his countrymen regarding the influence of such an apparition on human affairs; and, though he no longer considered the earth as a flat surface, or believed that the sun revolved around the globe, he still looked with dread upon this portent, which presaged to his mind disasters to the empire, if not death to the emperor. On becoming aware, however, that the comet was equally visible in England and other countries as in China, and receiving such a sketch of the history and theory of comets as my knowledge enabled me to impart—(and, be it said *en passant*, there are easier performances than the rendering of an astronomical lecture into colloquial Chinese)—he acknowledged that there seemed small grounds for prognosticating special harm to any particular land or person. This did not, however, prevent him from recalling to my mind, little more than a month later, when the

death of the reigning emperor actually took place, that the ominous "thief-star" had shone so recently in the heavens. The appearance of the comet and the ensuing death of Hien-fung were great feathers for the Zadkiel-cap of superstition all over China.

At length, towards 11 P.M., our weary ride of eighteen miles brought us to our halting-place for the night, at the village of Tien-sum, a large and straggling place, containing a population which would entitle it to rank as a town anywhere else than in China, almost entirely surrounded by a dense grove of huge banyan-trees, and further defended, as usual, by a wide belt of fish-ponds, forming a moat across which a few narrow causeways alone gave access to the place. Clattering through the tortuous and murky village street, we were by no means sorry to reach the spot where the great gates of the Temple of the Chang family were thrown open to receive us. Under the directions of the indefatigable A-sing, the court-yard was already littered with rice-straw for our ponies, and two huge red temple candles, flaring in the dim depths of the great hall, shed light on an extemporized table where teacups and cold fowl showed that preparations had been made for supper. The baggage-coolies, some dozen in number, were lying pillow'd on the bamboos and ropes with which their loads were in the daytime suspended from their shoulders, in the shelter of the colonnades on either side the doorway, and the remainder of our party, men and horses, were soon refreshing themselves with food and rest in their several ways.

It is lucky for the traveller that every village in China, however poor or scanty its population, possesses at least one, and often many, of these ancestral temples, in which each of the local "clans" or families preserves from generation to generation the memory of its revered progenitors. All, though not equally spacious, are constructed on an identical plan. An immense gateway, with three folding doors, sometimes twenty or even thirty feet in height, gives admission to a court-yard, and perhaps to a series of three or four such enclosures, which are generally open to the sky, surrounded on three sides with a covered colonnade, and terminating at the rear in a hall, the dimensions of which, in the case of wealthy clans, often extend to a width of from fifty to one hundred feet. Shrines are here built up against the wall, to contain in horizontal rows a series of tablets commemorating the departed members of the family, from the earliest progenitor of whom a record exists. Ornamental inscriptions further perpetuate the memory of all who have distinguished themselves in the profession of letters or the service of the State, and a richly decorated altar supports the vases of bronze or porcelain in which the ashes of the incense kept constantly burning before the tablets are carefully preserved in heaps from generation to generation. Twice in the year, the heads of the clan and other privileged members assemble with solemn ceremony and deep reverential feeling to do homage before the shrines where soon their own memorial tablets are to be erected, and fulfil the duties of filial piety in silent genuflection before the altar of the dead. At all seasons,

moreover, the temple is kept in order, and the sticks of incense trimmed, by a custodian for whose residence a side-building is usually set apart; and an annual contribution from every member maintains the building in constant repair. The most humble labourer who can claim kindred with the family can thus at any moment gaze with pride upon the hallowed name of every ancestor who has helped to illustrate his clan, and has always the means at hand of pointing to an indisputable pedigree which may connect him with the noblest in the land. Thus, in the temple which now gave us lodging for the night, tablets were to be seen commemorating a minister of State whose name was celebrated in China before William the Conqueror sat on the English throne, whilst the gilding was scarcely dry on the tablet of his latest follower to the tomb—some humble villager whose only title to remembrance was his name and clanship. There is surely no more touching form that filial reverence could take, than this perennial homage, altogether unassociated with idol-worship or hagiolatry, to the deceased; and it has conducted in no small degree to the success of the Roman Catholic propaganda, as compared with the relative failure of Protestant missionary efforts, that its priesthood has adopted, under certain restrictions, this form of ancestral commemoration, whilst the orthodox zeal of Protestant missionaries has insisted on its abandonment as one of the first steps toward conversion.

It may, perhaps, be thought that some violence could not fail being done to the feelings of those concerned in temples of this class, by using them as lodging for man and beast; but the callousness of the Chinese character shows itself nowhere more forcibly than in this point, that nothing short of wanton disrespect, even in the temples of their divinities, seems to jar with their reverential feelings. Their temples are habitually open for the accommodation of travellers, and it has more than once happened to myself that, when a party has been too numerous for the sleeping-room disposable in the temple occupied for the night, some jolly priest has voluntarily removed the incense-burners from the altar, and helped to dispose a camp-mattress at the very feet of the gilded gods themselves.

If no prejudices were likely to be offended, however, as regards the occupation of quarters in a temple, it was only within a very short period that national animosity was so fierce that no European's life would have been safe in the village where our party was now so civilly received. Inflamed by the arts of their rulers, the population of this province had, up to the year 1859, evinced the deadliest hatred towards foreigners, and the very building where we were now confidently betaking ourselves to rest, had, in 1858, been the seat of one of the committees of the native "gentry,"* formed for the express object of waging a war of

* Literati of a certain class and retired functionaries in general form—especially in the south of China—a privileged body to whom this term is applied, and who enjoy great local power.

assassination against the invaders who had taken possession of Canton. The vigorous measures directed by Mr. (now Sir Harry) Parkes, by which this organization became speedily broken up, combined with the conciliatory effect produced by the treatment extended to the authorities and inhabitants of Canton, had so far affected the popular temper as to disarm all active feeling of hostility even previously to the conclusion of peace in the North of China in 1860; and a mere solitary traveller would now have been safe, if prudent, unless at too great a distance from the walls of Canton, or in districts frequented by the robber-bands who infest so many parts of China.

Our slumbers passed undisturbed until the mental alarm which I had fixed the night previously for 5 A.M. awoke me just as the earliest rays of the sun were glittering on the enamelled porcelain figures which quaintly decorated the roof-tree on the opposite side of the court-yard. In a few moments all was astir. Our coolies had already found time to prepare a cup of tea, and to snatch a few whiffs from their consoling pipes; and soon, corded up our baggage and slinging the parcels from the centre of their stout bamboos, they trotted off nimbly in pairs, exchanging jokes with the few labourers, bound thus early to the fields, who hung about the door to witness our departure. A cup of cocoa all round prepared by the invaluable A-sing, a cigar apiece, and we, too, resume our march. The wrinkled old custodian of the temple grins feebly as he pockets a dollar for his services, and hobbles back to his morning pipe of opium, probably with a *tempora mutant* in Chinese upon his lips. The village children, rewarded for early rising, scramble on the flagstones for a handful of "cash" (total value about three-halfpence) which we throw amongst them; and we emerge from the straggling village into the oblique sun-glare, which proves trying enough, despite our precautions in the way of dress.

Convinced that the morning and evening sun is the most dangerous in the open field, inasmuch as its slanting rays can be warded off neither by head-covering nor umbrella, I had resolved on the experiment of travelling chiefly during the middle of the day and by night; but it was necessary to accomplish one stage thus early in order to bring us to our second halting-place by evening. Some ten miles farther on lay a pleasant little hamlet, whither the baggage had been despatched in charge of the accomplished A-sing, who was to prepare breakfast for the party; but our ride thither proved sultry enough—by the narrow pathway or dyke between the rice-fields, a mere mudbank scarcely two feet in breadth, along which we ambled perspiringly; our troubles increased by the radiation from the water which at that season still lay flooding the green rice-fields on either hand.

We could not, however, deny the striking beauty of the scene. Traversing a plain, one sheet of emerald verdure, our course ran parallel to the low chain of hills constituting the White Cloud range, whose flanks, half-shrouded in the mist distilled from the abundant irrigation, lay glowing in the softest violet tints, whilst, at frequent intervals, the green

expanse was broken by cloudy masses of foliage, denoting the sites of populous though obscure villages. Occasionally, when the road skirted some of these more closely, young and old might be seen crowding forth to crane at a glimpse of the passing strangers, the like of whom many, perhaps, had never looked on before. Whether it were that feminine curiosity mastered the usual feeling of alarm and doubt, or that a natural instinct told them they were safe, it almost universally happened that the village damsels and matrons ventured on a nearer approach than their husbands and brothers cared to indulge in. Seldom, however, does an attractive face display itself among these audacious fair ones. The squalid life of the Chinese peasantry—who, though sometimes amassing money, are content with the filthiest of habitations and of dress, and seldom seem to rise to an appreciation of that comparative comfort, cleanliness, and varied diet which even the lower classes of the town population indulge in—has its natural result in a grossness of feature and a deepening of the natural swarthy colour, until the Mongolian countenance, sometimes so delicate and fair, degenerates into the abject brutality of the Malay. Nothing, indeed, could be more unsavourable to the development of good looks than a Chinese village habitation. With the exception of one, or perhaps two streets, some ten or twelve feet in breadth, where the few wretched shops that supply the wants of the place are situated, the houses, built of mud-concrete, on a foundation of brick, are huddled together in fetid lanes, the utmost width of which is calculated to suit the passage of the water-buffaloes, as they are driven, morning and evening, to and from their owners' homes. No house possesses an upper story, or is lighted with any contrivance approaching to a window. A low doorway, the only aperture in the four walls of the house, gives entrance to a narrow, uncleanly court-yard, which again communicates with the dark and damp apartment, with possibly two or three still dingier and less ventilated side-rooms, forming the sole abode for a family of several generations. A fire-place in the porch serves to cook the rice and prepare the tea, which, with salt-fish and vegetables, constitute the universal diet; whilst what we denominate the "sweepings" are carelessly thrown out to join, in the black ooze of the lane, whatever other ordure may be there collected; its impurities draining through the soil to mingle with the water of the well sunk in a corner of the court-yard. Left entirely to self-government, which is conducted by a council of the oldest and least active members of the little community, the village is totally destitute of any system of drainage, and altogether innocent of even the most rural of police. Its inhabitants are never brought in contact with the central governing authority, save when twice a year the messengers of the district magistrate appear to claim the imperial land-tax and their own private extortions, or when on rare occasions some great crime traced home to some present or late inhabitant brings down the dreaded functionary himself, with a swarm of retainers and "braves" eager to embrace the opportunity for plunder afforded by the official perquisition.

Many such communities were skirted and left behind before we reached, by eight o'clock, our morning halt. A-sing, the ever-ready, had selected for our breakfast a grove of magnificent lychee-trees, gay with their pink bunches of cherry-like fruit, close to a small hamlet whose entire population stood grouped around his preparations for our repast. The "chow-chow" basket, which formed a load for one of our coolie-pairs, had poured forth its motley load of provisions; and cold fowl, potted meats, sardines, and biscuits, accompanied by sundry bottles of Allsopp's pale ale, were now prepared to quench our active appetites. We were too good travellers, however, to provide ourselves before seeing our ponies well groomed and settled down to plenteous baskets of paddy from the village rice-shop; nor did we appease our hunger until after much splashing and sponging in the shade of the lychee-trees, to the undisguised astonishment of the villagers, who saw us thus dangerously dabbling in cold water. At length we fell to, and performed feats of gastronomy which were also followed with wondering eyes, whilst our escort gladly received from our store some savoury additions to their own supply of cooked rations. The rustling branches of the lychee grove soon covered with their shade the outstretched bodies of our entire party; the light-blue smoke of our Manilas joining in a little cloud of incense to which the opium-pipe of my mandarin associate was not slow in adding its nauseous flavour.

All too soon for our wishes, the lychee shadows began to gather more and more closely about the roots of the trees, and just as the blazing sun looked hottest the time for moving arrived. Our baggage-coolies resuming their wide bamboo-hats, and sticking their pipes into the waistbands of the loose cotton drawers which formed their sole habiliments, had already set off, at their usual slinging trot, accompanied by the mandarin and servants in their sedans, before we roused ourselves to "boot and saddle" from our delicious drowsy lounge on the cool grass-plot. By noon, however, we were already emerging from the village, and exposed to the now vertical glare; but shaded as we were by white umbrellas and thick turbans wound round our felt helmets, the rays of heat were warded off to a degree impossible in the earlier stage of our march, and, though suffering unavoidably from the heated state of the atmosphere, we experienced no ill effects from the actual glare itself.

A few miles on our course happily brought us to a point where the White Cloud range is joined at right angles by a mountain chain from the westward, and through a defile at the point of junction lay the route we must take to reach our destination—the city of Tsung-hwa. On entering this defile we instantly exchanged the scenery of the unctuous and village-dotted plain for that of a picturesque valley, flanked on either hand by endless mountain perspectives, and traversed by a stream which, for varied beauty, might vie with many of our most famous English waters. A fresh breeze, borne straight from the flanks of the Lo-Po Mountains, whose lofty peaks, celebrated in Chinese song and story, were dimly seen on our right hand, tempered the atmosphere to a pleasant warmth; and dismounting,

followed by our obedient ponies, we enjoyed a careless saunter through the beauties of the secluded valley and its placid stream. My Engineer companion had come prepared to add every possible scrap to our records of the topography of the province, and having on previous occasions already carried a rough survey as far as the entrance of the pass, a prismatic compass now enabled us to plot down with tolerable accuracy the leading features of this tract. The question of nomenclature was settled by a whimsical reference to our never-failing cheroots; and to this day the curious inquirer may see Mount Cavendish, Negro-head Peak, and the Birdseye Range, with many another tobacco-flavoured appellation, on the road-map of our line of march.

Following at a little distance the curves of the river, our route grew more and more picturesque with our onward progress. Almost all trace of rice-cultivation was here at an end, and in its stead the straggling patches of arable land forming little bays and gullies in the line of hill were covered with the papilionaceous blossom of the ground-nut, cultivated for its yield of oil, or with the gigantic leaves of the yam, which, though affecting a marshy situation, is less dependent upon rich soil and constant flooding than the rice-plant. The villages appeared composed more of detached habitations, a few dwellings clustered here and there beneath graceful clumps of the feathery bamboo, or running down to form a sinuous street of shops along the river bank, dealing in sundry eatables, spirits, fuel, and cordage, for the benefit of the boatmen engaged in navigating the stream. Occasionally the inhabitants of some such rustic community would cluster in a gaping crowd along our path, equally puzzled as to the motive which led us to their secluded dale, our eccentric choice of trudging afoot when ponies were following behind, and the use of the unknown instrument of brass, which, every now and then, they saw twinkling in front of my companion's eye. Now and then the rough Canton boatmen of some passing barge ascending the stream with merchandise, or dropping down with fire-wood or oil, would descry us on the bank, and launch at us the not over-complimentary ejaculations which the Canton Chinese have even yet not entirely unlearnt; but no incivility met us from the inhabitants of the valley, whose experience of Europeans, limited to the sight of two or three mounted parties like our own, had not accustomed them to associate with the foreigners any feeling either of arrogance or terror.

Towards 4 P. M., our light-hearted party debouched upon an extensive plain, shut in, however, on every side, by mountain ranges, which, enveloped in the thin mist arising from the rice-flats, were now gorgeously tinted by the slanting radiance of the declining sun. Two streams, meandering from east and west, united almost at our feet to form the river whose course we had thus far ascended; whilst, hid from our view by a bold rock-shoulder on the further side of the stream, lay the city of Tsung-hwa, a little metropolis domineering in the centre of this rich and tranquil expanse. Just below the junction of the streams, the river

widened over sand-flats to a breadth probably of five hundred yards, forming a shallow ford.

Having safely waded through, and leaving our ponies in charge of the escort, my companion and myself clambered up the rock about which our route now wound, and whose summit was crowned by a graceful pagoda, affording a view on all sides of immense extent and beauty. The valley we had ascended, and the hill-encircled area, now carpeted green with the luxuriant rice-fields through a length of some twenty miles, forming the district of Tsung-hwa, lay smiling at our feet in the warm sunshine, which lit up into dazzling ribands of silver the two streams whose serpentine wanderings through the valley brought every part of its area within reach of irrigation. Thickly-studded groves marked the sites where villages lay hid, whilst immediately below us we looked down upon the moss-grown walls and roof-tops, interspersed with dense foliage, of the district city. This little nook, one of some eighty walled places in Kwang-tung, answering in a certain degree to our idea of a county town, had seven years previously been captured and sacked by the banditti who then desolated the province, and even from a distance the ruinous aspect of its little suburb testified to the devastation it had then undergone. Even the pagoda—which, according to the Chinese superstition as to terrestrial and topographical influences, or *Fung-shuei*, contributed from its eminence on the rock to the prosperity and literary excellence of the inhabitants of the city—had been gutted by the plunderers, whose ravages had scarcely left it in a condition for ascent beyond the first of its nine stories. After adding from this point a final series of mountain tops to our running survey, we proceeded to make our entry into the town.

Already warned of our approach, the magistrate had attempted some display in our honour at the gateway. Passing beneath a low but massive archway, we found ourselves in a narrow court-yard, formed by a circular bastion interrupting the line of wall, from the inner side of which a second gateway, placed at right angles to the outer one, communicated with the main street of the city. Here, half-a-dozen decrepit old men, who had been employed until our arrival at a cobbler's bench at one side of the court-yard, but who had hastily thrown over their rags their dirty, ~~soldiers'~~ jackets of calico, were drawn up, headed by a brass-buttoned petty officer scarcely less ragged than the men themselves, and greeted us by a simultaneous obeisance, performed by bending forward on one knee; whilst three iron tubes, placed upright in the ground and loaded with powder, were discharged as the orthodox salute in honour of a "mandarin." The narrow, granite-paved street—scarcely ten feet wide, and lined with ruinous houses of the poorest class, save where great gaps of ruin caused by fire or natural decay from a dwindling population intervened—was lined with a multitude of young and old, attracted from all corners to gaze upon the strangers who had come from so far.

Our march at length terminated at a species of common or green in the heart of the city, on one side of which towered the gateway of a temple, somewhat similar to that we had quitted in the morning, where I was met by the authorities of the place—the magistrate, or civil governor, with his two assistants, and a rubicund, portly mandarin, perspiring beneath the shade of his low conical hat of gauzy straw, surmounted by a blue glass button, who was introduced as the major in command of the resident garrison, including the tatterdemalion heroes who had turned out to salute us at our entrance. The mandarins, in their long tunics of blue silk gauze, belted at the waist, and buckled in with costly morsels of sculptured jade—their handsomely embroidered facings indicative of rank, their neat accoutrements of fan, pipe, and watch-cases dependent from their belts—were in striking contrast to the squalor of their attendants, who, dirty in clothing, unwashed, and foul-smelling, crowded eagerly behind their masters to witness our reception. A ceremony of painful length ensued on our alighting, begun by a vigorous shaking of hands between the magistrate and myself, whilst the corpulent major appropriately grasped my companion's palms with both his own; and the lesser dignitaries followed suit, much to the surprise of our steady corporal's guard, by shaking hands demonstratively with them also. A struggle of etiquette then followed, amid which we were gradually led through a series of court-yards, divided from each other by highly ornate folding-doors, to the spacious hall which had been prepared as our lodging-place. Two rows of seats, covered with crimson cloth, and placed facing each other on either hand in front of the usual dais where seats for the two principal personages are arranged, were now occupied for the first ceremonious interview, during which, whilst tea was handed round in minute cups, I renewed the acquaintance formed two years previously with the amiable magistrate, whose literary abilities had won for him very early advancement. We were soon, however, considerably left to refresh ourselves after our journey, though a speedy interruption arrived to disturb my towelling, in the shape of a train of coolies with presents—baskets of fruit and vegetables, eggs by the hundred, some dozen of ducks and fowls, a live sheep, and trays laden with a hundred kinds of sweetmeats—which, after selecting a few insignificant articles, and rewarding the bearers with a sum considerably greater than their aggregate value, were duly sent back, in accordance with the same rule of politeness which prescribed the form of presentation.

Scarcely were our baths over and our toilette renewed than messengers arrived, bearing sheets of crimson paper, the magistrate's invitation cards, bidding us to a banquet prepared in his *yamen*, or official residence, where my Chinese companion had already been accommodated with quarters. A short ride brought us to the great doors, each decorated with a gaudy figure of some deified warrior or lawgiver, before which lay huddled a crowd of filthy, half-naked, and vermin-covered wretches—some heavily manacled, others chained to loose blocks of stone, and others crouching

beneath the intolerable weight of wooden collars—who, according to the Chinese system, were here exposed whilst undergoing detention for some of the lighter crimes. The *yamun* itself, in its zigzag courts and ranges of low offices, was as ruinous as such buildings usually are in China, where each occupant comes in for an uncertain period, unwilling to expend money, save perhaps for patching up a leaky roof, and only too ready to appropriate to his private purse the pittance periodically allowed by the Government for repairs. The magistrate's reception-room, however, was a cosy place enough, walled only on three sides, and looking out on the fourth through a lattice screen upon a little paved yard with rockwork and flowering shrubs, over which the branches thrown out from a magnificent banyan-tree in an adjoining court cast an almost impenetrable shade. In this cool apartment an ebony table was spread with the preliminary trifles which usher in a Chinese feast, and the magistrate, with his two chief associates and my companion Tse, was awaiting our arrival. Chinese dinners have been so frequently described of late years that it would be superfluous here to enlarge upon the successive courses, the savoury stews of shark-fin, fish with vermicelli, ducks stuffed with chestnuts, and all the host of spiced and minced, sweet and gelatinous dishes which follow each other in endless profusion, but still in artfully-contrived gradations.

A passing protest must, however, be indulged in against that jocular habit of misrepresentation which, from the days of Von Braam to that of some of our latest travellers, has introduced apocryphal dogs and kittens at the tables of Chinese magnates. Without going the length of Mr. Cooke, who almost gives the Chinese *cuisine* a place beside that of Paris, it may be said not only that in no country are all available sources more ransacked than in China for every attainable delicacy, but that the diversity of viands, and the scrupulous care as to cookery, which prevail in a well-ordered repast, suffice amply to provide the most fastidious stranger with palatable and easily-digested food. Not being a blind panegyrist of Chinese gastronomy, I will by no means deny that a somewhat obnoxious preponderance of pork-fat does now and then occur at certain stages of the meal; but a special corrective for this diet is introduced by the strong white rice-spirit with which each convive's cup is kept constantly steaming, whilst a saucerful of delicious almonds, slightly burned, beside each plate, assists at the same time to temper the effects of this heady liquor. But to attribute the unclean diet already mentioned to any other than the very lowest class in China, is as absurd and false as it would be were a Chinese sailor to report, on his return to the Flowery Kingdom, that the citizens of London live exclusively on tripe.

Neither of us strangers to the use of chopsticks, my Engineer companion and myself enjoyed, like hungry wayfarers as we were, the good things provided for us, though the attentions of the obese commandant proved somewhat overpowering to his brother soldier. Regardless of the

fact that his language was unintelligible to my companion, the major overwhelmed him with compliments and civilities in the intervals of the repast, stopping every now and then to gather upon his own chopsticks a choice selection from the various dishes, which he deposited in a luscious heap on the already well-filled plate. My companion, smiling suavely, returned these attentions to the best of his ability, with the polite "Chin-chin," which uninstructed Europeans believe to be Chinese for "Thank you," "How do you do?" and all manner of other courtesies; as well as by the convulsive bobbing, with which, similarly, they endeavour to imitate the Chinese salute; whilst, for my own part, I found myself involved in the circle of formal conversation which Chinese functionaries, politely assuming an appearance of interest in matters of European politics and science, invariably enter upon on such occasions; but, at length, the final rice-bowls were emptied, tea was handed round, and our banquet of three hours' duration was at an end.

My business with the really estimable magistrate was speedily despatched; and while preparations were set on foot, under his orders, for our journey further into the hills, we retired to our camp-beds in the temple where we were lodged. To describe ~~the further~~ adventures of our journey through the valley and into the hills beyond, whence descending obliquely we traversed the rugged White Rock Pass on our return to Canton, would now require too great a space; but having set out on the morning following our banquet, we continued for four days afterwards in the saddle, penetrating to a mountain region never before explored by Europeans, and successfully accomplishing the objects with which my journey had been commenced. When our midsummer ride brought us back at length to the gates of Canton, we trotted in—despite the ninety-five degrees of Fahrenheit—fresher, healthier, and more gaily than when we had left them behind us a week before.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HALF-SISTERS.



T appeared as if Mrs. Gibson's predictions were likely to be verified; for Osborne Hamley found his way to her drawing-room pretty frequently. To be sure, sometimes prophets can help on the fulfilment of their own prophecies; and Mrs. Gibson was not passive.

Molly was altogether puzzled by his manners and ways. He spoke of occasional absences from the Hall, without exactly saying where he had been. But that was not her idea of the conduct of a married man, who, she imagined, ought to have a house and servants, and pay rent and taxes, and live with his wife. Who this mysterious wife might be, faded into insignificance

before the wonder of where she was. London, Cambridge, Dover, nay even France, were mentioned by him as places to which he had been on these different little journeys. These facts came out quite casually, almost as if he was unaware of what he was betraying; sometimes he dropped out such sentences as these:—"Ah, that would be the day I was crossing! It was stormy, indeed! Instead of our being only two hours, we were nearly five." Or, "I met Lord Hollingsford at Dover last week, and he said," &c. "The cold now is nothing to what it was in London on Thursday—the thermometer was down at 15°." Perhaps, in the rapid flow of conversation, these small revelations were noticed by no one but Molly; whose interest and curiosity were always hovering over the secret she had become possessed of, in spite of all her self-reproach for allowing her thoughts to dwell on what was still to be kept as a mystery.

It was also evident to her that Osborne was not too happy at home. He had lost the slight touch of cynicism which he had affected when he



ROGER IS INTRODUCED AND ENSLATED.

was expected to do wonders at college ; and that was one good result of his failure. If he did not give himself the trouble of appreciating other people, and their performances, at any rate his conversation was not so amply sprinkled with critical pepper. He was more absent, not so agreeable, Mrs. Gibson thought, but did not say. He looked ill in health ; but that might be the consequence of the real depression of spirits which Molly occasionally saw peeping out through all his pleasant surface-talk. Now and then, he referred to "the happy days that are gone," or, "to the time when my mother was alive," when talking directly to her ; and then his voice sank, and a gloom came over his countenance, and Molly longed to express her own deep sympathy. He did not often mention his father ; and Molly thought she could read in his manner, when he did, that something of the painful restraint she had noticed when she was last at the Hall still existed between them. Nearly all that she knew of the family interior she had heard from Mrs. Hamley, and she was uncertain as to how far her father was acquainted with them ; so she did not like to question him too closely ; nor was he a man to be so questioned as to the domestic affairs of his patients. Sometimes she wondered if it was a dream—that short half hour in the library at Hamley Hall—when she had learnt a fact which seemed so all-important to Osborne, yet which made so little difference in his way of life—either in speech or action. During the twelve or fourteen hours or so that she had remained at the Hall afterwards, no further allusion had been made to his marriage, either by himself or by Roger. It was, indeed, very like a dream. Probably Molly would have been rendered much more uncomfortable in the possession of her secret if Osborne had struck her as particularly attentive in his devotion to Cynthia. She evidently amused and attracted him, but not in any lively or passionate kind of manner. He admired her beauty, and seemed to feel her charm ; but he would leave her side, and come to sit near Molly, if anything reminded him of his mother, about which he could talk to her, and to her alone. Yet he came so often to the Gibsons, that Mrs. Gibson might be excused for the fancy she had taken into her head, that it was for Cynthia's sake. He liked the lounge, the friendliness, the company of two intelligent girls of beauty and manners above the average ; one of whom stood in a peculiar relation to him, as having been especially beloved by the mother whose memory he cherished so fondly. Knowing himself to be out of the category of bachelors, he was, perhaps, too indifferent as to other people's ignorance, and its possible consequences.

Somehow, Molly did not like to be the first to introduce Roger's name into the conversation, so she lost many an opportunity of hearing intelligence about him. Osborne was often so languid or so absent that he only followed the lead of talk ; and as an awkward fellow, who had paid her no particular attention, and as a second son, Roger was not pre-eminent in Mrs. Gibson's thoughts ; Cynthia had never seen him, and the fresh did not take her often to speak about him. He had not come home since

he had obtained his high place in the mathematical lists: that Molly knew; and she knew, too, that he was working hard for something—she supposed a fellowship—and that was all. Osborne's tone in speaking of him was always the same: every word, every inflexion of the voice breathed out affection and respect—nay, even admiration! And this from the *nil admirari* brother, who seldom carried his exertions so far.

"Ah, Roger!" he said one day. Molly caught the name in an instant, though she had not heard what had gone before. "He is a fellow in a thousand—in a thousand, indeed! I don't believe there is his match anywhere for goodness and real solid power combined."

"Molly," said Cynthia, after Mr. Osborne Hamley had gone, "what sort of a man is this Roger Hamley? One can't tell how much to believe of his brother's praises; for it is the one subject on which Osborne Hamley becomes enthusiastic. I've noticed it once or twice before."

While Molly hesitated on which point of the large round to begin her description, Mrs. Gibson struck in,—

"It just shows what a sweet disposition Osborne Hamley is of—that he should praise his brother as he does. I daresay he is senior wrangler, and much good may it do him! I don't deny that; but as for conversation, he's as heavy as heavy can be. A great awkward fellow to boot, who looks as if he did not know two and two made four, for all he is such a mathematical genius. You would hardly believe he was Osborne Hamley's brother to see him! I should not think he had a profile at all."

"What do you think of him, Molly?" said the persevering Cynthia.

"I like him," said Molly. "He has been very kind to me. I know he isn't handsome like Osborne."

It was rather difficult to say all this quietly, but Molly managed to do it, quite aware that Cynthia would not rest till she had extracted some kind of an opinion out of her.

"I suppose he will come home at Easter," said Cynthia, "and then I shall see him for myself."

"It's a great pity that their being in mourning will prevent their going to the Easter charity ball," said Mrs. Gibson, plaintively. "I shan't like to take you two girls, if you are not to have any partners. It will put me in such an awkward position. I wish we could join on to the Towers party. That would secure you partners, for they always bring a number of dancing men, who might dance with you after they had done their duty by the ladies of the house. But really everything is so changed since dear Lady Gunnor has been an invalid that perhaps they won't go at all."

This Easter ball was a great subject of conversation with Mrs. Gibson. She sometimes spoke of it as her first appearance in society as a bride, though she had been visiting once or twice a week all winter long. Then she shifted her ground, and said she felt so much interest in it, because she would then have the responsibility of introducing both her own and Mr. Gibson's daughter to public notice, though the fact was that pretty

nearly every one who was going to this ball had seen the two young ladies—though not their ball dresses—before. But, sping the manners of the aristocracy as far as she knew them, she intended to “bring out” Molly and Cynthia on this occasion, which she regarded in something of the light of a presentation at Court. “They are not out yet,” was her favourite excuse when either of them was invited to any house to which she did not wish them to go, or invited without her. She even made a difficulty about their “not being out” when Miss Browning—that old friend of the Gibson family—came in one morning to ask the two girls to come to a very friendly tea and a round game afterwards; this mild piece of gaiety being designed as an attention to three of Mrs. Goodenough’s grandchildren—two young ladies and their school-boy brother—who were staying on a visit to their grandmamma.

“ You are very kind, Miss Browning, but you see I hardly like to let them go—they are not out, you know, till after the Easter ball.”

“ Till when we are invisible,” said Cynthia, always ready with her mockery to exaggerate any pretension of her mother’s. “ We are so high in rank that our sovereign must give us her sanction before we can play a round game at your house.”

Cynthia enjoyed the idea of her own full-grown size and stately gait, as contrasted with that of a meek, half-fledged girl in the nursery; but Miss Browning was half puzzled and half affronted.

“ I don’t understand it at all. In my days girls went wherever it pleased people to ask them, without this farce of bursting out in all their new fine clothes at some public place. I don’t mean but what the gentry took their daughters to York, or Matlock, or Bath to give them a taste of gay society when they were growing up; and the quality went up to London, and their young ladies were presented to Queen Charlotte, and went to a birthday ball, perhaps. But for us little Hollingsford people, why we knew every child amongst us from the day of its birth; and many a girl of twelve or fourteen have I seen go out to a card-party, and sit quiet at her work, and know how to behave as well as any lady there. There was no talk of ‘coming out’ in those days for any one under the daughter of a squire.”

“ After Easter, Molly and I shall know how to behave at a card-party, but not before,” said Cynthia, demurely.

“ You’re always fond of your quips and your cranks, my dear,” said Miss Browning, “ and I wouldn’t quite answer for your behaviour: you sometimes let your spirits carry you away. But I’m quite sure Molly will be a little lady as she always is, and always was, and I have known her from a babe.”

Mrs. Gibson took up arms on behalf of her own daughter, or rather, she took up arms against Molly’s praises.

“ I don’t think you would have called Molly a lady the other day, Miss Browning, if you had found her where I did: sitting up in a cherry-tree, six feet from the ground at least, I do assure you.”

"Oh! but that wasn't pretty," said Miss Browning, shaking her head at Molly. "I thought you'd left off those tomboy ways."

"She wants the refinement which good society gives in several ways," said Mrs. Gibson, returning to the attack on poor Molly. "She's very apt to come upstairs two steps at a time."

"Only two, Molly!" said Cynthia. "Why, to-day I found I could manage four of these broad shallow steps."

"My dear child, what are you saying?"

"Only confessing that I, like Molly, want the refinements which good society gives; therefore, please do let us go to Miss Brownings' this evening. I will pledge myself for Molly that she shan't sit in a cherry-tree; and Molly shall see that I don't go upstairs in an unladylike way. I will go upstairs as meekly as if I were a come-out young lady, and had been to the Easter ball."

So it was agreed that they should go. If Mr. Osborne Hamley had been named as one of the probable visitors, there would have been none of this difficulty about the affair.

But though he was not there his brother Roger was. Molly saw him in a minute when she entered the little drawing-room; but Cynthia did not.

"And see, my dears," said Miss Phœbe Browning, turning them round to the side where Roger stood waiting for his turn of speaking to Molly. "We've got a gentleman for you after all! Wasn't it fortunate?—just as sister said that you might find it dull—you, Cynthia, she meant, because you know you come from France; and then, just as if he had been sent from heaven, Mr. Roger came in to call; and I won't say we laid violent hands on him, because he was too good for that; but really we should have been near it, if he had not stayed of his own accord."

The moment Roger had done his cordial greeting to Molly, he asked her to introduce him to Cynthia.

"I want to know her—your new sister," he added, with the kind smile Molly remembered so well since the very first day she had seen it directed towards her, as she sate crying under the weeping ash. Cynthia was standing a little behind Molly when Roger asked for this introduction. She was generally dressed with careless grace. Molly, who was delicate neatness itself, used sometimes to wonder how Cynthia's tumbled gowns, tossed away so untidily, had the art of looking so well and falling in such graceful folds. For instance, the pale lilac muslin gown she wore this evening had been worn many times before, and had looked unfit to wear again until Cynthia put it on. Then the limpness became softness, and the very creases took the lines of beauty. Molly, in a daintily clean pink muslin, did not look half so elegantly dressed as Cynthia. The grave eyes that the latter raised when she had to be presented to Roger had a sort of child-like innocence and wonder about them, which did not quite belong to Cynthia's character. She put on her armour of magic

that evening—involuntarily as she always did ; but, on the other side, she could not help trying her power on strangers. Molly had always felt that she should have a right to a good long talk with Roger when she next saw him ; and that he would tell her, or she should gather from him, all the details she so longed to hear about the squire—about the Hall—about Osborne—about himself. He was just as cordial and friendly as ever with her. If Cynthia had not been there all would have gone on as she had anticipated; but of all the victims to Cynthia's charms he fell most prone and abject. Molly saw it all, as she was sitting next to Miss Phœbe at the tea-table, acting right-hand, and passing cake, cream, sugar, with such busy assiduity that every one besides herself thought that her mind, as well as her hands, was fully occupied. She tried to talk to the two shy girls, as in virtue of her two years' seniority she thought herself bound to do ; and the consequence was, she went upstairs with the twain clinging to her arms, and willing to swear an eternal friendship. Nothing would satisfy them but that she must sit between them at vingt-un ; and they were so desirous of her advice in the important point of fixing the price of the counters that she could not ever have joined in the animated tête-à-tête going on between Roger and Cynthia. Or rather, it would be more correct to say that Roger was talking in a most animated manner to Cynthia, whose sweet eyes were fixed upon his face with a look of great interest in all he was saying, while it was only now and then she made her low replies. Molly caught a few words occasionally in intervals of business.

"At my uncle's, we always give a silver threepence for three dozen. You know what a silver threepence is, don't you, dear Miss Gibson ? "

"The three classes are published in the Senate House at nine o'clock on the Friday morning, and you can't imagine—"

"I think it will be thought rather shabby to play at anything less than sixpence. 'That gentleman' (this in a whisper) "is at Cambridge, and you know they always play very high there, and sometimes ruin themselves, don't they, dear Miss Gibson ? "

"Oh, on this occasion the Master of Arts who precedes the candidates for honours when they go into the Senate House is called the Father of the College to which he belongs. I think I mentioned that before, didn't I ? "

So Cynthia was hearing all about Cambridge, and the very examination about which Molly had felt such keen interest, without having ever been able to have her questions answered by a competent person ; and Roger, to whom she had always looked as the final and most satisfactory answerer, was telling all she wanted to know, and she could not listen. It took all her patience to make up little packets of counters, and settle, as the arbiter of the game, whether it would be better for the round or the oblong counters to be reckoned as six. And when all was done, and every one sat in their places round the table, Roger and Cynthia had to be called twice before they came. They stood up, it is true, at the first

sound of their names; but they did not move: Roger went on talking, Cynthia listening, till the second call—when they hurried to the table and tried to appear all on a sudden quite interested in the great questions of the game, namely, the price of three dozen counters, and whether, all things considered, it would be better to call the round counters or the oblong half-a-dozen each. Miss Browning, drumming the pack of cards on the table, and quite ready to begin dealing, decided the matter by saying, “ Rounds are sixes, and three dozen counters cost sixpence. Pay up, if you please, and let us begin at once.” Cynthia sat between Roger and William Osborne, the young schoolboy, who bitterly resented on this occasion his sister’s habit of calling him “ Willie,” as he thought that it was this boyish sobriquet which prevented Cynthia from attending as much to him as to Mr. Roger Hamley; he also was charmed by the charmer, who found leisure to give him one or two of her sweet smiles. On his return home to his grandmamma’s he gave out one or two very decided and rather original opinions, quite opposed—as was natural—to his sister’s. One was—

“ That, after all, a senior wrangler was no great shakes. Any man might be one if he liked, but there were a lot of fellows that he knew who would be very sorry to go in for anything so slow.”

Molly thought the game never would end. She had no particular turn for gambling in her; and whatever her card might be, she regularly put on two counters, indifferent as to whether she won or lost. Cynthia, on the contrary, staked high, and was at one time very rich, but ended by being in debt to Molly something like six shillings. She had forgotten her purse, she said, and was obliged to borrow from the more provident Molly, who was aware that the round game of which Miss Browning had spoken to her was likely to require money. If it was not a very merry affair for all the individuals concerned, it was a very noisy one on the whole. Molly thought it was going to last till midnight; but punctually as the clock struck nine, the little maid-servant staggered in under the weight of a tray loaded with sandwiches, cakes, and jelly. This brought on a general move; and Roger, who appeared to have been on the watch for something of the kind, came and took a chair by Molly.

“ I am so glad to see you again—it seems such a long time since Christmas,” said he, dropping his voice, and not alluding more exactly to the day when she had left the Hall.

“ It is a long time,” she replied; “ we are close to Easter now. I have so wanted to tell you how glad I was to hear about your honours at Cambridge. I once thought of sending you a message through your brother, but then I thought it might be making too much fuss, because I know nothing of mathematics, or of the value of a senior-wranglership; and you were sure to have so many congratulations from people who did know.”

“ I missed you though, Molly,” said he, kindly. “ But I felt you were glad for me.”

"Glad and proud too," said she. "I should so like to hear something more about it. I heard you telling Cynthia——"

"Yes. What a charming person she is! I should think you must be happier than we expected long ago."

"But tell me something about the senior-wranglership, please," said Molly.

"It's a long story, and I ought to be helping the Miss Brownings to hand sandwiches—besides, you wouldn't find it very interesting, it's so full of technical details."

"Cynthia looked very much interested," said Molly.

"Well! then I refer you to her, for I must go now. I can't for shame go on sitting here, and letting those good ladies have all the trouble. But I shall come and call on Mrs. Gibson soon. Are you walking home to-night?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Molly, eagerly foreseeing what was to come.

"Then I shall walk home with you. I left my horse at the 'Angel,' and that's half-way. I suppose old Betty will allow me to accompany you and your sister? You used to describe her as something of a dragon."

"Betty has left us," said Molly, sadly. "She's gone to live at a place at Ashcombe."

He made a face of dismay, and then went off to his duties. The short conversation had been very pleasant, and his manner had had just the brotherly kindness of old times; but it was not quite the manner he had to Cynthia; and Molly half thought she would have preferred the latter. He was now hovering about Cynthia, who had declined the offer of refreshments from Willie Osborne. Roger was tempting her, and with playful entreaties urging her to take something from him. Every word they said could be heard by the whole room; yet every word was said, on Roger's part at least, as if he could not have spoken it in that peculiar manner to any one else. At length, and rather more because she was weary of being entreated, than because it was his wish, Cynthia took a macaroon, and Roger seemed as happy as though she had crowned him with flowers. The whole affair was as trifling and commonplace as could be in itself: hardly worth noticing: and yet Molly did notice it, and felt uneasy; she could not tell why. As it turned out, it was a rainy night, and Mrs. Gibson sent a fly for the two girls instead of old Betty's substitute. Both Cynthia and Molly thought of the possibility of their taking the two Osborne girls back to their grandmother's, and so saving them a wet walk; but Cynthia got the start in speaking about it; and the thanks and the implied praise for thoughtfulness were hers.

When they got home Mr. and Mrs. Gibson were sitting in the drawing-room, quite ready to be amused by any details of the evening.

Cynthia began,—

"Oh! it wasn't very entertaining. One didn't expect that," and she yawned wearily.

"Who were there?" asked Mr. Gibson. "Quite a young party—wasn't it?"

"They'd only asked Lizzie and Fanny Osborne, and their brother; but Mr. Roger Hamley had ridden over and called on Miss Brownings, and they had kept him to tea. No one else."

"Roger Hamley there!" said Mr. Gibson. "He's come home then. I must make time to ride over and see him."

"You'd much better ask him here," said Mrs. Gibson. "Suppose you invite him and his brother to dine here on Friday, my dear? It would be a very pretty attention, I think."

"My dear! these young Cambridge men have a very good taste in wine, and don't spare it. My cellar won't stand many of their attacks."

"I didn't think you were so inhospitable, Mr. Gibson."

"I'm not inhospitable, I'm sure. If you'll put 'bitter beer' in the corner of your notes of invitation, just as the smart people put 'quadrilles' as a sign of the entertainment offered, we'll have Osborne and Roger to dinner any day you like. And what did you think of my favourite, Cynthia? You hadn't seen him before, I think?"

"Oh! he's nothing like so handsome as his brother; nor so polished; nor so easy to talk to. He entertained me for more than an hour with a long account of some examination or other; but there's something one likes about him."

"Well—and Molly—" said Mrs. Gibson, who piqued herself on being an impartial stepmother; and who always tried hard to make Molly talk as much as Cynthia—"what sort of an evening have you had?"

"Very pleasant, thank you." Her heart a little belied her as she said this. She had not cared for the round game; and she would have cared for Roger's conversation. She had had what she was indifferent to, and not had what she would have liked.

"We've had our unexpected visitor, too," said Mr. Gibson. "Just after dinner who should come in but Mr. Preston. I fancy he's having more of the management of the Hollingsford property than formerly. Sheepshanks is getting an old man. And if so, I suspect we shall see a good deal of Preston. He's 'no blate,' as they used to say in Scotland, and made himself quite at home to-night. If I'd asked him to stay, or, indeed, if I'd done anything but yawn, he'd have been here now. But I defy any man to stay when I have a fit of yawning."

"Do you like Mr. Preston, papa?" asked Molly.

"About as much as I do half the men I meet. He talks well, and has seen a good deal. I know very little of him, though, except that he's my lord's steward, which is a guarantee for a good deal."

"Lady Harriet spoke pretty strongly against him that day I was with her at the Manor-house."

"Lady Harriet's always full of fancies: she likes persons to-day, and dislikes them to-morrow," said Mrs. Gibson, who was touched on her sore point whenever Molly quoted Lady Harriet, or said anything to imply even so transitory an intimacy with her.

" You must know a good deal about Mr. Preston, my dear? I suppose you saw a good deal of him at Ashcombe?"

Mrs. Gibson coloured, and looked at Cynthia before she replied. Cynthia's face was set into a determination not to speak, however much she might be referred to.

" Yes; we saw a good deal of him—at one time, I mean. He's changeable, I think. But he always sent us game, and sometimes fruit. There were some stories against him, but I never believed them."

" What kind of stories?" said Mr. Gibson, quickly.

" Oh, vague stories, you know: scandal, I daresay. No one ever believed them. He could be so agreeable if he chose; and my lord, who is so very particular, would never have kept him as agent if they were true; not that I ever knew what they were, for I consider all scandal as abominable gossip."

" I'm very glad I yawned in his face," said Mr. Gibson. " I hope he'll take the hint."

" If it was one of your giant-gapes, papa, I should call it more than a hint," said Molly. " And if you want a yawning chorus the next time he comes, I'll join in; won't you, Cynthia?"

" I don't know," replied the latter, shortly, as she lighted her bed-candle. The two girls had usually some nightly conversation in one or other of their bed-rooms; but to-night Cynthia said something or other about being terribly tired, and hastily shut her door.

The very next day, Roger came to pay his promised call. Molly was out in the garden with Williams, planning the arrangement of some new flower-beds, and deep in her employment of placing pegs upon the lawn to mark out the different situations, when, standing up to mark the effect, her eye was caught by the figure of a gentleman, sitting with his back to the light, leaning forward, and talking, or listening, eagerly. Molly knew the shape of the head perfectly, and hastily began to put off her brown-holland gardening apron, emptying the pockets as she spoke to Williams.

" You can finiah it now, I think," said she. " You know about the bright-coloured flowers being against the privet-hedge, and where the new rose-bed is to be?"

" I can't justly say as I do," said he. " Mebbe, you'll just go o'er it all once again, Miss Molly. I'm not so young as I oncest was, and my head is not so clear now-a-days, and I'd be loth to make mistakes when you're so set upon your plans."

Molly gave up her impulse in a moment. She saw that the old gardener was really perplexed, yet that he was as anxious as he could be to do his best. So she went over the ground again, pegging and explaining till the wrinkled brow was smooth again, and he kept saying, " I see, miss. All right, Miss Molly, I've getten it in my head as clear as patch-work now."

So she could leave him, and go in. But just as she was close to the

garden door, Roger came out. It really was for once a case of virtue its own reward, for it was far pleasanter to her to have him in a tête-à-tête, however short, than in the restraint of Mrs. Gibson's and Cynthia's presence.

"I only just found out where you were, Molly. Mrs. Gibson said you had gone out, but she didn't know where; and it was the greatest chance that I turned round and saw you."

"I saw you some time ago, but I couldn't leave Williams. I think he was unusually slow to-day; and he seemed as if he couldn't understand my plan for the new flower-beds."

"Is that the paper you've got in your hand? Let me look at it, will you? Ah, I see! you've borrowed some of your ideas from our garden at home, haven't you? This bed of scarlet geraniums, with the border of young oaks, pegged down! That was a fancy of my dear mother's."

They were both silent for a minute or two. Then Molly said,—

"How is the squire? I've never seen him since."

"No, he told me how much he wanted to see you, but he couldn't make up his mind to come and call. I suppose it would never do now for you to come and stay at the Hall, would it? It would give my father so much pleasure: he looks upon you as a daughter, and I'm sure both Osborne and I shall always consider you are like a sister to us, after all my mother's love for you, and your tender care of her at last. But I suppose it wouldn't do."

"No! certainly not," said Molly, hastily.

"I fancy if you could come it would put us a little to rights. You know, as I think I once told you, Osborne has behaved differently to what I should have done, though not wrongly,—only what I call an error of judgment. But my father, I'm sure, has taken up some notion of—never mind; only the end of it is that he holds Osborne still in tacit disgrace, and is miserable himself all the time. Osborne, too, is sore and unhappy, and estranged from my father. It is just what my mother would have put right very soon, and perhaps you could have done it—unconsciously, I mean—for this wretched mystery that Osborne preserves about his affairs is at the root of it all. But there's no use talking about it; I don't know why I began." Then, with a wrench, changing the subject, while Molly still thought of what he had been telling her, he broke out,—"I can't tell you how much I like Miss Kirkpatrick, Molly. It must be a great pleasure to you having such a companion!"

"Yes," said Molly, half smiling. "I'm very fond of her; and I think I like her better every day I know her. But how quickly you have found out her virtues!"

"I didn't say 'virtues,' did I?" asked he, reddening, but putting the question in all good faith. "Yet I don't think one could be deceived in that face. And Mrs. Gibson appears to be a very friendly person,—she has asked Osborne and me to dine here on Friday."

"Bitter beer" came into Molly's mind; but what she said was, "And are you coming?"

"Certainly, I am, unless my father wants me; and I've given Mrs. Gibson a conditional promise for Osborne too. So I shall see you all very soon again. But I must go now. I have to keep an appointment seven miles from here in half an hour's time. Good luck to your flower-garden, Molly."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OLD SQUIRE'S TROUBLES.

AFFAIRS were going on worse at the Hall than Roger had liked to tell. Moreover, very much of the discomfort there arose from "mere manner," as people express it, which is always indescribable and indefinable. Quiet and passive as Mrs. Hamley had always been in appearance, she was the ruling spirit of the house as long as she lived. The directions to the servants, down to the most minute particulars, came from her sitting-room, or from the sofa on which she lay. Her children always knew where to find her; and to find her, was to find love and sympathy. Her husband, who was often restless and angry from one cause or another, always came to her to be smoothed down and put right. He was conscious of her pleasant influence over him, and became at peace with himself when in her presence; just as a child is at ease when with some one who is both firm and gentle. But the keystone of the family arch was gone, and the stones of which it was composed began to fall apart. It is always sad when a sorrow of this kind seems to injure the character of the mourning survivors. Yet, perhaps, this injury may be only temporary or superficial; the judgments so constantly passed upon the way people bear the loss of those whom they have deeply loved, appear to be even more cruel, and wrongly meted out, than human judgments generally are. To careless observers, for instance, it would seem as though the squire was rendered more capricious and exacting, more passionate and authoritative, by his wife's death. The truth was, that it occurred at a time when many things came to harass him, and some to bitterly disappoint him; and *she* was no longer there to whom he used to carry his sore heart for the gentle balm of her sweet words, if the sore heart ached and smarted intensely; and often, when he saw how his violent conduct affected others, he could have cried out for their pity, instead of their anger and resentment: "Have mercy upon me, for I am very miserable." How often have such dumb thoughts gone up from the hearts of those who have taken hold of their sorrow by the wrong end, as prayers against sin! And when the squire saw that his servants were learning to dread him, and his first-born to avoid him, he did not blame them. He knew he was becoming a domestic tyrant; it seemed as if all circumstances conspired against him, and as if he was too weak to struggle with them; else, why did everything do-

doors and out-of-doors go so wrong just now, when all he could have done, had things been prosperous, was to have submitted, in very imperfect patience, to the loss of his wife? But just when he needed ready money to pacify Osborne's creditors, the harvest had turned out remarkably plentiful, and the price of corn had sunk down to a level it had not touched for years. The squire had insured his life at the time of his marriage for a pretty large sum. It was to be a provision for his wife, if she had survived him, and for their younger children. Roger was the only representative of these interests now; but the squire was unwilling to lose the insurance by ceasing to pay the annual sum. He would not, if he could, have sold any part of the estate which he inherited from his father; and, besides, it was strictly entailed. He had sometimes thought how wise a step it would have been could he have sold a portion of it, and with the purchase-money have drained and reclaimed the remainder; and at length, learning from some neighbour that Government would make certain advances for drainage, &c., at a very low rate of interest, on condition that the work was done, and the money repaid, within a given time, his wife had urged him to take advantage of the proffered loan. But now that she was no longer here to encourage him, and take an interest in the progress of the work, he grew indifferent to it himself, and cared no more to go out on his stout roan cob, and sit square on his seat, watching the labourers on the marshy land all overgrown with rushes; speaking to them from time to time in their own strong nervous country dialect: but the interest to Government had to be paid all the same, whether the men worked well or ill. Then the roof of the Hall let in the melted snow-water this winter; and, on examination, it turned out that a new roof was absolutely required. The men who had come about the advances made to Osborne by the London money-lender, had spoken disparagingly of the timber on the estate—"Very fine trees—sound, perhaps, too, fifty years ago, but gone to rot now; had wanted lopping and clearing. Was there no wood-ranger or forester? They were nothing like the value young Mr. Hamley had represented them to be of." The remarks had come round to the squire's ears. He loved the trees he had played under as a boy as if they were living creatures; that was on the romantic side of his nature. Merely looking at them as representing so many pounds sterling, he had esteemed them highly, and had had, until now, no opinion of another by which to correct his own judgment. So these words of the valuers cut him sharp, although he affected to disbelieve them, and tried to persuade himself that he did so. But, after all, these cares and disappointments did not touch the root of his deep resentment against Osborne. There is nothing like wounded affection for giving poignancy to anger. And the squire believed that Osborne and his advisers had been making calculations, based upon his own death. He hated the idea so much—it made him so miserable—that he would not face it, and define it, and meet it with full inquiry and investigation. He chose rather to cherish the morbid fancy that he was useless in this world—born under an unlucky

star—that all things went badly under his management. But he did not become humble in consequence. He put his misfortunes down to the score of Fate—not to his own; and he imagined that Osborne saw his failures, and that his first-born grudged him his natural term of life. All these fancies would have been set to rights could he have talked them over with his wife; or even had he been accustomed to mingle much in the society of those whom he esteemed his equals; but, as has been stated, he was inferior in education to those who should have been his mates; and perhaps the jealousy and *mauvaise honte* that this inferiority had called out long ago, extended itself in some measure to the feelings he entertained towards his sons—less to Roger than to Osborne, though the former was turning out by far the most distinguished man. But Roger was practical; interested in all out-of-doors things, and he enjoyed the details, homely enough, which his father sometimes gave him of the every-day occurrences which the latter had noticed in the woods and the fields. Osborne, on the contrary, was what is commonly called “fine;” delicate almost to effeminacy in dress and in manner; careful in small observances. All this his father had been rather proud of in the days when he had looked forward to a brilliant career at Cambridge for his son; he had at that time regarded Osborne’s fastidiousness and elegance as another stepping-stone to the high and prosperous marriage which was to restore the ancient fortunes of the Hamley family. But now that Osborne had barely obtained his degree; that all the boastings of his father had proved vain; that the fastidiousness had led to unexpected expenses (to attribute the most innocent cause to Osborne’s debts), the poor young man’s ways and manners became a subject of irritation to his father. Osborne was still occupied with his books and his writings when he was at home; and this mode of passing the greater part of the day gave him but few subjects in common with his father when they did meet at meal-times, or in the evenings. Perhaps if Osborne had been able to have more out-of-door amusements it would have been better; but he was short-sighted, and cared little for the carefully-observant pursuits of his brother: he knew but few young men of his own standing in the county; his hunting even, of which he was passionately fond, had been curtailed this season, as his father had disposed of one of the two hunters he had been hitherto allowed. The whole stable establishment had been reduced; perhaps because it was the economy which told most on the enjoyment of both the squire and Osborne, and which, therefore, the former took a savage pleasure in enforcing. The old carriage—a heavy family coach bought in the days of comparative prosperity—was no longer needed after madam’s death, and fell to pieces in the cobwebbed seclusion of the coach-house. The best of the two carriage-horses was taken for a gig, which the squire now set up; saying many a time to all who might care to listen to him that it was the first time for generations that the Hamleys of Hamley had not been able to keep their own coach. The other carriage-horse was turned

out to grass ; being too old for regular work. Conqueror used to come whinnying up to the park palings whenever he saw the squire, who had always a piece of bread, or some sugar, or an apple for the old favourite—and made many a complaining speech to the dumb animal, telling him of the change of times since both were in their prime. It had never been the squire's custom to encourage his boys to invite their friends to the Hall. Perhaps this, too, was owing to his *mauvaise honte*, and also to an exaggerated consciousness of the deficiencies of his establishment as compared with what he imagined these lads were accustomed to at home. He explained this once or twice to Osborne and Roger when they were at Rugby.

" You see, all you public schoolboys have a kind of freemasonry of your own, and outsiders are looked on by you much as I look on rabbits and all that isn't game. Ay, you may laugh, but it is so ; and your friends will throw their eyes askance at me, and never think on my pedigree, which would beat theirs all to shivers, I'll be bound. No : I'll have no one here at the Hall who will look down on a Hamley of Hamley, even if he only knows how to make a cross instead of write his name."

Then, of course, they must not visit at houses to whose sons the squire could not or would not return a like hospitality. On all these points Mrs. Hamley had used her utmost influence without avail ; his prejudices were immovable. As regarded his position as head of the oldest family in three counties, his pride was invincible ; as regarded himself personally —ill at ease in the society of his equals, deficient in manners, and in education—his morbid sensitiveness was too sore and too self-conscious to be called humility.

Take one instance from among many similar scenes of the state of feeling between the squire and his eldest son, which, if it could not be called active discord, showed at least passive estrangement.

It took place on an evening in the March succeeding Mrs. Hamley's death. Roger was at Cambridge. Osborne had also been from home, and he had not volunteered any information as to his absence. The squire believed that Osborne had been either in Cambridge with his brother, or in London ; he would have liked to hear where his son had been, what he had been doing, and whom he had seen, precisely as pieces of news, and as some diversion from the domestic worries and cares which were pressing him hard ; but he was too proud to ask any questions, and Osborne had not given him any details of his journey. This silence had aggravated the squire's internal dissatisfaction, and he came home to dinner weary and sore-hearted a day or two after Osborne's return. It was just six o'clock, and he went hastily into his own little business-room on the ground-floor, and, after washing his hands, came into the drawing-room feeling as if he were very late, but the room was empty. He glanced at the clock over the mantelpiece, as he tried to warm his hands at the fire. The fire had been neglected, and had gone out during the day ; it was now piled up with half-dried wood, which

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sputtered and smoked instead of doing its duty in blazing and warming the room, through which the keen wind was cutting its way in all directions. The clock had stopped, no one had remembered to wind it up, but by the squire's watch it was already past dinner-time. The old butler put his head into the room, but, seeing the squire alone, he was about to draw it back, and wait for Mr. Osborne, before announcing dinner. He had hoped to do this unperceived, but the squire caught him in the act.

"Why isn't dinner ready?" he called out sharply. "It's ten minutes past six. And, pray, why are you using this wood? It's impossible to get oneself warm by such a fire as this."

"I believe, sir, that Thomas——"

"Don't talk to me of Thomas. Send dinner in directly."

About five minutes elapsed, spent by the hungry squire in all sorts of impatient ways—attacking Thomas, who came in to look after the fire; knocking the logs about, scattering out sparks, but considerably lessening the chances of warmth; touching up the candles, which appeared to him to give a light unusually insufficient for the large cold room. While he was doing this, Osborne came in dressed in full evening dress. He always moved slowly; and this, to begin with, irritated the squire. Then an uncomfortable consciousness of a black coat, drab trowsers, checked cotton cravat, and splashed boots, forced itself upon him as he saw Osborne's point-device costume. He chose to consider it affectation and finery in Osborne, and was on the point of bursting out with some remark, when the butler, who had watched Osborne downstairs before making the announcement, came in to say that dinner was ready.

"It surely isn't six o'clock?" said Osborne, pulling out his dainty little watch. He was scarcely more aware than it of the storm that was brewing.

"Six o'clock! It's more than a quarter past," growled out his father.

"I fancy your watch must be wrong, air. I set mine by the Horse Guards only two days ago."

Now, impugning that old steady, turnip-shaped watch of the squire's was one of the insults which, as it could not reasonably be resented, was not to be forgiven. That watch had been given him by his father when watches were watches long ago. It had given the law to house-clocks, stable-clocks, kitchen-clocks—nay, even to Hamley Church clock in its day; and was it now, in its respectable old age, to be looked down upon by a little whipper-snapper of a French watch which could go into a man's waistcoat pocket, instead of having to be extricated, with due efforts, like a respectable watch of size and position, from a fob in the waistband. No! Not if the whipper-snapper were backed by all the Horse Guards that ever were, with the Life Guards to boot. Poor Osborne might have known better than to cast this slur on his father's flesh and blood; for so dear did he hold his watch!

"My watch is like myself," said the squire, 'giving,' as the Scotch

say—"plain, but steady-going. At any rate, it gives the law in my house. The King may go by the Horse Guards if he likes."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Osborne, really anxious to keep the peace; "I went by my watch, which is certainly right by London time; and I'd no idea you were waiting for me; otherwise I could have dressed much quicker."

"I should think so," said the squire, looking sarcastically at his son's attire. "When I was a young man I should have been ashamed to have spent as much time at my looking-glass as if I'd been a girl. I could make myself as smart as any one when I was going to a dance, or to a party where I was likely to meet pretty girls; but I should have laughed myself to scorn if I'd stood fiddle-faddling at a glass, smirking at my own likeness, all for my own pleasure."

Osborne reddened, and was on the point of letting fly some caustic remark on his father's dress at the present moment; but he contented himself with saying, in a low voice,—

"My mother always expected us all to dress for dinner. I got into the habit of doing it to please her, and I keep it up now." Indeed, he had a certain kind of feeling of loyalty to her memory in keeping up all the little domestic habits and customs she had instituted or preferred. But the contrast which the squire thought was implied by Osborne's remark, put him beside himself.

"And I, too, try to attend to her wishes. I do: and in more important things. I did when she was alive; and I do so now."

"I never said you did not," said Osborne, astonished at his father's passionate words and manner.

"Yes, you did, sir. You meant it. I could see by your looks. I saw you look at my morning-coat. At any rate, I never neglected any wish of hers in her lifetime. If she'd wished me to go to school again and learn my A, B, C, I would. By —— I would; and I wouldn't have gone playing me, and lounging away my time, for fear of vexing and disappointing her. Yet some folks older than schoolboys——" The squire choked here; but though the words would not come his passion did not diminish. "I'll not have you casting up your mother's wishes to me, sir. You, who went near to break her heart at last!"

Osborne was strongly tempted to get up and leave the room. Perhaps it would have been better if he had; it might then have brought about an explanation, and a reconciliation between father and son. But he thought he did well in sitting still and appearing to take no notice. This indifference to what he was saying appeared to annoy the squire still more, and he kept on grumbling and talking to himself till Osborne, unable to bear it any longer, said, very quietly, but very bitterly—

"I am only a cause of irritation to you, and home is no longer home to me, but a place in which I am to be controlled in trifles, and scolded about trifles as if I were a child. Put me in a way of making a living for myself—that much your oldest son has a right to ask of you—I will then

leave this house, and you shall be no longer vexed by my dress, or my want of punctuality."

" You make your request pretty much as another son did long ago : ' Give me the portion that falleth to me.' But I don't think what he did with his money is much encouragement for me to ——" Then the thought of how little he could give his son his 'portion,' or any part of it, stopped the squire.

Osborne took up the speech.

" I'm as ready as any man to earn my living ; only the preparation for any profession will cost money, and money I haven't got."

" No more have I," said the squire, shortly.

" What is to be done then ? " said Osborne, only half believing his father's words.

" Why, you must learn to stop at home, and not take expensive journeys ; and you must redeem your tailor's bill. I don't ask you to help me in the management of the land—you're far too fine a gentleman for that ; but if you can't earn money, at least you needn't spend it."

" I've told you I'm willing enough to earn money," cried Osborne, passionately at last. " But how am I to do it ? You really are very unreasonable, sir."

" Am I ? " said the squire—cooling in manner, though not in temper, as Osborne grew warm. " But I don't set up for being reasonable : men who have to pay away money that they haven't got for their extravagant sons, aren't likely to be reasonable. There's two things you've gone and done which put me beside myself, when I think of them : you've turned out next door to a dunce at college, when your poor mother thought so much of you—and when you might have pleased and gratified her so if you chose—and, well ! I won't say what the other thing is."

" Tell me, sir," said Osborne, almost breathless with the idea that his father had discovered his secret marriage ; but the father was thinking of the money-lenders, who were calculating how soon Osborne would come into the estate.

" No ! " said the squire. " I know what I know ; and I'm not going to tell you how I know it. Only, I'll just say this—your friends no more know a piece of good timber when they see it than you or I know how you could earn five pounds if it was to keep you from starving. Now, there's Roger—we none of us made an ado about him ; but he'll have his fellowship now I'll warrant him, and be a bishop, or a chancellor, or something, before we've found out he's clever—we've been so much taken up thinking about you. I don't know what's come over me to speak of ' we — ' we ' in this way," said he, suddenly dropping his voice,—a change of voice as sad as sad could be. " I ought to say ' I ; ' it will be ' I ' for evermore in this world."

He got up and left the room in quick haste, knocking over his chair, and not stopping to pick it up. Osborne, who was sitting and shading his eyes with his hand, as he had been doing for some time, looked up at the noise,

and then rose as quickly and hurried after his father, only in time to hear the study-door locked on the inside the moment he reached it.

Osborne returned into the dining-room chagrined and sorrowful. But he was always sensitive to any omission of the usual observances, which might excite remark; and even with his heavy heart he was careful to pick up the fallen chair, and restore it to its place near the bottom of the table; and afterwards so to disturb the dishes as to make it appear that they had been touched, before ringing for Robinson. When the latter came in, followed by Thomas, Osborne thought it necessary to say to him that his father was not well, and had gone into the study; and that he himself wanted no dessert, but would have a cup of coffee in the drawing-room. The old butler sent Thomas out of the room, and came up confidentially to Osborne.

"I thought master wasn't justly himself, Mr. Osborne, before dinner. And therefore I made excuses for him—I did. He spoke to Thomas about the fire, sir, which is a thing I could in nowise put up with, unless by reason of sickness, which I am always ready to make allowances for."

"Why shouldn't my father speak to Thomas?" said Osborne. "But, perhaps, he spoke angrily, I daresay; for I'm sure he's not well."

"No, Mr. Osborne, it wasn't that. I myself am given to anger; and I'm blessed with as good health as any man in my years. Besides, anger's a good thing for Thomas. He needs a deal of it. But it should come from the right quarter—and that is me myself, Mr. Osborne. I know my place, and I know my rights and duties as well as any butler that lives. And it's my duty to scold Thomas, and not master's. Master ought to have said, 'Robinson! you must speak to Thomas about letting out the fire,' and I'd ha' given it him well,—as I shall do now, for that matter. But as I said before, I make excuses for master, as being in mental distress and bodily ill-health; so I've brought myself round not to give warning, as I should ha' done, for certain, under happier circumstances."

"Really, Robinson, I think it's all great nonsense," said Osborne, weary of the long story the butler had told him, and to which he had not half attended. "What in the world does it signify whether my father speaks to you or to Thomas? Bring me coffee in the drawing-room, and don't trouble your head any more about scolding Thomas."

Robinson went away offended at his grievance being called nonsense. He kept muttering to himself in the intervals of scolding Thomas, and saying,—“Things is a deal changed since poor missis went. I don't wonder master feels it, for I'm sure I do. She was a lady who had always a becoming respect for a butler's position, and could have understood how he might be hurt in his mind. She'd never ha' called his delicacies of feelings nonsense—not she; no more would Mr. Roger. He's a merry young gentleman, and over-fond of bringing dirty, slimy creatures into the house; but he's always a kind word for a man who is hurt in his mind. He'd cheer up the squire, and keep him from getting so cross and wilful. I wish Mr. Roger was here, I do.”

The poor squire, shut up with his grief and his ill-temper as well, in the dingy, dreary study in which he daily spent more and more of his indoor life, turned over his cares and troubles till he was as bewildered with the process as a squirrel must be in going round in a cage. He had out day-books and ledgers, and was calculating up back-rents; and every time the sum-totals came to different amounts. He could have cried like a child over his sums; he was worn out and weary, angry and disappointed. He closed his books at last with a bang.

"I'm getting old," he said, "and my head's less clear than it used to be. I think sorrow for her has dazed me. I never was much to boast on; but she thought a deal of me—bless her! She'd never let me call myself stupid; but, for all that, I am stupid. Osborne ought to help me. He's had money enough spent on his learning; but instead, he comes down dressed like a popinjay, and never troubles his head to think how I'm to pay his debts. I wish I'd told him to earn his living as a dancing-master," said the squire, with a sad smile at his own wit. "He's dressed for all the world like one. And how he's spent the money no one knows! Perhaps Roger will turn up some day with a heap of creditors at his heels. No, he won't—not Roger; he may be slow, but he's steady, is old Roger. I wish he was here. He's not the eldest son, but he'd take an interest in the estate; and he'd do up these weary accounts for me. I wish Roger was here!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

OSBORNE HAMLEY REVIEWS HIS POSITION.

OSBORNE had his solitary cup of coffee in the drawing-room. He was very unhappy too, after his fashion. He stood on the hearth-rug pondering over his situation. He was not exactly aware how hardly his father was pressed for ready-money; the squire had never spoken to him on the subject without being angry; and many of his loose contradictory statements—all of which, however contradictory they might appear, had their basis in truth—were set down by his son to the exaggeration of passion. But it was uncomfortable enough to a young man of Osborne's age to feel himself continually hampered for want of a five-pound note. The principal supplies for the liberal—almost luxurious table at the Hall, came off the estate; so that there was no appearance of poverty as far as the household went; and as long as Osborne was content at home, he had everything he could wish for; but he had a wife elsewhere—he wanted to see her continually—and that necessitated journeys. She, poor thing! had to be supported: where was the money for the journeys and for Aimée's modest wants to come from? That was the puzzle in Osborne's mind just now. While he had been at college his allowance—heir of the Hamleys—had been three hundred, while Roger had to be content with a hundred less. The payment of these annual sums had given the squire a

good deal of trouble; but he thought of it as a merely temporary inconvenience; perhaps unreasonably thought so. Osborne was to do great things; take high honours, get a fellowship, marry a long-descended heiress, live in some of the many uninhabited rooms at the Hall, and help the squire in the management of the estate that would some time be his. Roger was to be a clergyman; steady, slow Roger was just fitted for that, and when he declined entering the Church, preferring a life of more activity and adventure, Roger was to be anything; he was useful and practical, and fit for all the employments from which Osborne was shut out by his fastidiousness, and his (pseudo) genius; so it was well he was an eldest son, for he would never have done to struggle through the world; and as for his settling down to a profession, it would be like cutting blocks with a razor! And now here was Osborne, living at home, but longing to be elsewhere; his allowance stopped in reality; indeed the punctual payment of it during the last year or two had been owing to his mother's exertions; but nothing had been said about its present cessation by either father or son: money matters were too sore a subject between them. Every now and then the squire threw him a ten-pound note or so; but the sort of suppressed growl with which they were given, and the entire uncertainty as to when he might receive them, rendered any calculation based upon their receipt exceedingly vague and uncertain.

"What in the world can I do to secure an income?" thought Osborne, as he stood on the hearth-rug, his back to a blazing fire, his cup of coffee sent up in the rare old china that had belonged to the Hall for generations; his dress finished, as dress of Osborne's could hardly fail to be. One could hardly have thought that this elegant young man, standing there in the midst of comfort that verged on luxury, should have been turning over that one great problem in his mind; but so it was. "What can I do to be sure of a present income? Things cannot go on as they are. I should need support for two or three years, even if I entered myself at the Temple, or Lincoln's Inn. It would be impossible to live on my pay in the army; besides, I should hate that profession. In fact, there are evils attending all professions—I couldn't bring myself to become a member of any I've ever heard of. Perhaps I'm more fitted to take orders than anything else, but to be compelled to write weekly sermons whether one had anything to say or not, and, probably, doomed only to associate with people below one in refinement and education! Yet poor Aimée must have money. I can't bear to compare our dinners here, overloaded with joints and game and sweets, as Dawson will persist in sending them up, with Aimée's two little mutton-chops. Yet what would my father say if he knew I'd married a Frenchwoman? In his present mood he'd disinherit me, if that is possible; and he'd speak about her in a way I couldn't stand. A Roman Catholic, too! Well, I don't repent it. I'd do it again. Only if my mother had been in good health, if she could have heard my story, and known Aimée! As it is, I must keep it secret; but where to get money? Where to get money?"

Then he bethought him of his poems—would they sell, and bring him in money? In spite of Milton, he thought they might; and he went to fetch his MSS. out of his room. He sate down near the fire, trying to study them with a critical eye, to represent public opinion as far as he could. He had changed his style since the Mrs. Hemans' days. He was essentially imitative in his poetic faculty; and of late he had followed the lead of a popular writer of sonnets. He turned his poems over: they were almost equivalent to an autobiographical passage in his life. Arranging them in their order, they came as follows:—

“To Aimée, Walking with a Little Child.”

“To Aimée, Singing at her Work.”

“To Aimée, turning away from me while I told my Love.”

“Aimée's Confession.”

“Aimée in Despair.”

“The Foreign Land in which my Aimée dwells.”

“The Wedding Ring.”

“The Wife.”

When he came to this last sonnet he put down his bundle of papers and began to think. “The wife.” Yes, and a French wife; and a Roman Catholic wife—and a wife who might be said to have been in service! And his father's hatred of the French, both collectively and individually—collectively, as tumultuous brutal ruffians, who murdered their king, and committed all kinds of bloody atrocities: individually, as represented by “Boney,” and the various caricatures of “Johnny Crapaud” that had been in full circulation about five-and-twenty years before this time—when the squire had been young and capable of receiving impressions. As for the form of religion in which Mrs. Osborne Hamley had been brought up, it is enough to say that Catholic emancipation had begun to be talked about by some politicians, and that the sullen roar of the majority of Englishmen, at the bare idea of it, was surging in the distance with ominous threatenings; the very mention of such a measure before the squire was, as Osborne well knew, like shaking a red flag before a bull.

And then he considered that if Aimée had had the unspeakable, the incomparable blessing of being born of English parents, in the very heart of England—Warwickshire, for instance—and had never heard of priests, or mass, or confession, or the Pope, or Guy Fawkes, but had been born, baptized, and bred in the Church of England, without having ever seen the outside of a dissenting meeting-house, or a papist chapel—even with all these advantages, her having been a (what was the equivalent for “boune” in English? nursery-governess was a term hardly invented) nursery-maid, with wages paid down once a quarter, liable to be dismissed at a month's warning, and having her tea and sugar doled out to her, would be a shock to his father's old ancestral pride that he would hardly ever get over.

“If he saw her!” thought Osborne. “If he could but see her!” But if the squire were to see Aimée, he would also hear her speak her pretty broken English—precious to her husband, as it was in it that she

had confessed brokenly with her English tongue, that she loved him soundly with her French heart—and Squire Hamley piqued himself on being a good hater of the French. “ She would make such a loving, sweet, docile little daughter to my father—she would go as near as any one could towards filling up the blank void in this house, if he could but have her ; but he won’t ; he never would ; and he shan’t have the opportunity of scouting her. Yet if I called her “ Lucy ” in these sonnets ; and if they made a great effect—were praised in *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly* —and all the world was agog to find out the author ; and I told him my secret—I could if I were successful—I think then he would ask who Lucy was, and I could tell him all then. If—how I hate ‘ifs.’ ‘If me no ifs.’ My life has been based on ‘whens ;’ and first they have turned to ‘ifs,’ and then they have vanished away. It was ‘when Osborne gets honours,’ and then ‘if Osborne,’ and then a failure altogether. I said to Aimée, ‘When my mother sees you,’ and now it is ‘If my father saw her,’ with a very faint prospect of its ever coming to pass.” So he let the evening hours flow on and disappear in reveries like these ; winding up with a sudden determination to try the fate of his poems with a publisher, with the direct expectation of getting money for them, and an ulterior fancy that, if successful, they might work wonders with his father.

When Roger came home Osborne did not let a day pass before telling his brother of his plans. He never did conceal anything long from Roger ; the feminine part of his character made him always desirous of a confidant, and as sweet sympathy as he could extract. But Roger’s opinion had no effect on Osborne’s actions ; and Roger knew this full well. So when Osborne began with—“ I want your advice on a plan I have got in my head,” Roger replied : “ Some one told me that the Duke of Wellington’s maxim was never to give advice unless he could enforce its being carried into effect ; now I can’t do that ; and you know, old boy, you don’t follow out my advice when you’ve got it.”

“ Not always, I know. Not when it does not agree with my own opinion. You are thinking about this concealment of my marriage ; but you’re not up in all the circumstances. You know how fully I meant to have done it, if there had not been that row about my debts ; and then my mother’s illness and death. And now you’ve no conception how my father is changed—how irritable he has become ! Wait till you’ve been at home a week ! . Robinson, Morgan—it’s the same with them all ; but worst of all with me ! ”

“ Poor fellow ! ” said Roger ; “ I thought he looked terribly changed ; shranken, and his ruddiness of complexion altered.”

“ Why, he hardly takes half the exercise he used to do, so it’s no wonder. He has turned away all the men off the new works, which used to be such an interest to him ; and because the roan cob stumbled with him one day, and nearly threw him, he won’t ride it ; and yet he won’t sell it and buy another, which would be the sensible plan ; so there are two old horses eating their heads off, while he is constantly talking

about money and expense. And that brings me to what I was going to say. I'm desperately hard up for money, and so I've been collecting my poems—weeding them well, you know—going over them quite critically, in fact; and I want to know if you think Deighton would publish them. You've a name in Cambridge, you know; and I daresay he would look at them if you offered them to him."

"I can but try," said Roger; "but I'm afraid you won't get much by them."

"I don't expect much. I'm a new man, and must make my name. I should be content with a hundred. If I'd a hundred pounds I'd set myself to do something. I might keep myself and Aimée by my writings while I studied for the bar; or, if the worst came to the worst, a hundred pounds would take us to Australia."

"Australia! Why, Osborne, what could you do there? And leave my father! I hope you'll never get your hundred pounds, if that's the use you're to make of it! Why, you'd break the squire's heart."

"It might have done once," said Osborne, gloomily, "but it would not now. He looks at me askance, and shies away from conversation with me. Let me alone for noticing and feeling this kind of thing. It's this very susceptibility to outward things that gives me what faculty I have; and it seems to me as if my bread, and my wife's too, were to depend upon it. You'll soon see for yourself the terms which I am on with my father!"

Roger did soon see. His father had slipped into a habit of silence at meal-times—a habit which Osborne, who was troubled and anxious enough for his own part, had not striven to break. Father and son sate together, and exchanged all the necessary speeches connected with the occasion civilly enough; but it was a relief to them when their intercourse was over, and they separated—the father to brood over his sorrow and his disappointment, which were real and deep enough, and the injury he had received from his boy, which was exaggerated in his mind by his ignorance of the actual steps Osborne had taken to raise money. If the money-lenders had calculated the chances of his father's life or death in making their bargain, Osborne himself had thought only of how soon and how easily he could get the money requisite for clearing him from all imperious claims at Cambridge, and for enabling him to follow Aimée to her home in Alsace, and for the subsequent marriage. As yet, Roger had never seen his brother's wife; indeed, he had only been taken into Osborne's full confidence after all was decided in which his advice could have been useful. And now, in the enforced separation, Osborne's whole thought, both the poetical and practical sides of his mind, ran upon the little wife who was passing her lonely days in farmhouse lodgings, wondering when her bridegroom husband would come to her next. With such an engrossing subject it was, perhaps, no wonder that he unconsciously neglected his father; but it was none the less sad at the time, and to be regretted in its consequences.

"I may come in and have a pipe with you, sir, mayn't I?" said Roger, that first evening, pushing gently against the study-door, which his father held only half open.

"You'll not like it," said the squire, still holding the door against him, but speaking in a relenting tone. "The tobacco I use isn't what young men like. Better go and have a cigar with Osborne."

"No. I want to sit with you, and I can stand pretty strong tobacco."

Roger pushed in, the resistance slowly giving way before him.

"It will make your clothes smell. You'll have to borrow Osborne's scents to sweeten yourself," said the squire, grimly, at the same time pushing a short smart amber-mouthed pipe to his son.

"No; I'll have a churchwarden. Why, father, do you think I'm a baby to put up with a doll's-head like this?" looking at the carving upon it.

The squire was pleased in his heart, though he did not choose to show it. He only said, "Osborne brought it me when he came back from Germany. That's three years ago." And then for some time they smoked in silence. But the voluntary companionship of his son was very soothing to the squire, though not a word might be said. The next speech he made showed the direction of his thoughts; indeed his words were always a transparent medium through which the current might be seen.

"A deal of a man's life comes and goes in three years—I've found that out." And he puffed away at his pipe again. While Roger was turning over in his mind what answer to make to this truism, the squire again stopped his smoking and spoke.

"I remember when there was all that fuss about the Prince of Wales being made Regent, I read somewhere—I daresay it was in a newspaper—that kings and their heirs-apparent were always on bad terms. Osborne was quite a little chap then: he used to go out riding with me on White Surrey; you won't remember the pony we called White Surrey?"

"I remember it; but I thought it a tall horse in those days."

"Ah! that was because you were such a small lad, you know. I had seven horses in the stable then—not counting the farm-horses. I don't recollect having a care then, except—she was always delicate, you know. But what a beautiful boy Osborne was! He was always dressed in black velvet—it was a poppetry, but it wasn't my doing, and it was all right, I'm sure. He's a handsome fellow now, but the sunshine has gone out of his face."

"He's a good deal troubled about this money, and the anxiety he has given you," said Roger, rather taking his brother's feelings for granted.

"Not he," said the squire, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and hitting the bowl so sharply against the hob that it broke in pieces. "There! But never mind! I say, not he, Roger! He's none troubled about the money. It's easy getting money from Jews if you're the eldest son, and the heir. They just ask, 'How old is your father, and has he had a stroke, or a fit?' and it's settled out of hand, and then they

come prowling about a place, and running down the timber and land—Don't let us speak of him ; it's no good, Roger. He and I are out of tune, and it seems to me as if only God Almighty could put us to rights. It's thinking of how he grieved her at last that makes me so bitter with him. And yet there's a deal of good in him ! and he's so quick and clever, if only he'd give his mind to things. Now, you were always slow, Roger—all your masters used to say so."

Roger laughed a little—

" Yes; I'd many a nickname at school for my slowness," said he.

" Never mind ! " said the squire, consolingly. " I'm sure I don't. If you were a clever fellow like Osborne yonder, you'd be all for caring for books and writing, and you'd perhaps find it as dull as he does to keep company with a bumpkin-squire Jones like me. Yet I daresay they think a deal of you at Cambridge," said he, after a pause, " since you've got this fine wranglership ; I'd nearly forgotten that—the news came at such a miserable time."

" Well, yes ! They're always proud of the senior wrangler of the year up at Cambridge. Next year I must abdicate."

The squire sat and gazed into the embers, still holding his useless pipe-stem. At last he said, in a low voice, as if scarcely aware he had got a listener,—" I used to write to her when she was away in London, and tell her the home news. But no letter will reach her now ! Nothing reaches her ! "

Roger started up.

" Where's the tobacco-box, father ? Let me fill you another pipe ! " and when he had done so, he stooped over his father and stroked his cheek. The squire shook his head.

" You've only just come home, lad. You don't know me, as I am now-a-days ! Ask Robinson—I won't have you asking Osborne, he ought to keep it to himself—but any of the servants will tell you I'm not like the same man for getting into passions with them. I used to be reckoned a good master, but that is past now ! Osborne was once a little boy, and she was once alive—and I was once a good master—a good master—yes ! It is all past now."

He took up his pipe, and began to smoke afresh, and Roger, after a silence of some minutes, began a long story about some Cambridge man's misadventure on the hunting-field, telling it with such humour that the squire was beguiled into hearty laughing. When they rose to go to bed his father said to Roger,—

" Well, we've had a pleasant evening—at least, I have. But perhaps you have not ; for I'm but poor company now, I know."

" I don't know when I've passed a happier evening, father," said Roger. And he spoke truly, though he did not trouble himself to find out the cause of his happiness.

The Winds.

O wild raving west winds

Oh ! where do ye rise from, and where do ye die ?

THE question which is put in these lines is one which has posed the ingenuity of all who have ever thought on it; and though theories have repeatedly been propounded to answer it, yet one and all fail, and we again recur to the words of Him who knew all things and said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

However, though we cannot assign exactly the source whence the winds rise or the goal to which they tend, the labours of meteorologists have been so far successful as to enable us to understand the causes of the great currents of air, and even to map out the winds which prevail at different seasons in the various quarters of the globe. The problem which has thus been solved is one vastly more simple than that of saying why the wind changes on any particular day, or at what spot on the earth's surface a particular current begins or ends. Were these questions solved, there would be an end to all uncertainty about weather. There need be no fear that the farmer would lose his crops owing to the change of weather, if the advent of every shower had been foretold by an unerring guide, and the precise day of the break in the weather predicted weeks and months before. This is the point on which weather-prophets—"astro-meteorologists" they call themselves now-a-days—still venture their predictions, undismayed by their reported and glaring failures. It has been well remarked that not one of these prophets foretold the dry weather which lasted for so many weeks during the last summer; yet, even at the present day, there are people who look to the almanacks to see what weather is to be expected at a given date; and even the prophecies of "Old Moore" find, or used to find within a very few years, an ample credence. In fact, if we are to believe the opinions propounded by the positive philosophers of the present day, we must admit that it is absurd to place any limits on the possibility of predicting natural phenomena, inasmuch as all operations of nature obey fixed and unalterable laws, which are all discoverable by the unaided mind of man.

True science, we may venture to say, is more modest than these gentlemen would have us to think it; and though in the particular branch of knowledge of which we are now treating, daily prophecies (or "forecasts," as Admiral Fitzroy is careful to call them,) of weather appear in the newspapers, yet these are not announced dogmatically, and no attempt is made in them to foretell weather for more than forty-eight hours in advance. We are not going to discuss the question of storms and storm-signals at present, so we shall proceed to the subject in hand—the ordinary wind-currents of the earth; and in speaking of these shall

confine ourselves as far as possible to well-known and recorded facts, bringing in each case the best evidence which we can adduce to support the theories which may be broached.

What then, our readers will ask, is the cause of the winds? The simple answer is—the Sun. Let us see, now, how this indefatigable agent, who appears to do almost everything on the surface of the earth, from painting pictures to driving steam-engines, as George Stephenson used to maintain that he did, is able to raise the wind.

If you light a fire in a room, and afterwards stop up every chink by which air can gain access to the fire, except the chimney, the fire will go out in a short time. Again, if a lamp is burning on the table, and you stop up the chimney at the top, the lamp will go out at once. The reason of this is that the flame, in each case, attracts the air, and if either the supply of air is cut off below, or its escape above is checked, the flame cannot go on burning. This explanation, however, does not bear to be pushed too far. The reason that the fire goes out if the supply of air is cut off is, that the flame, so to speak, feeds on air; while the sun cannot be said, in any sense, to be dependent on the earth's atmosphere for the fuel for his fire. We have chosen the illustration of the flame, because the facts are so well known. If, instead of a lamp in the middle of a room, we were to hang up a large mass of iron, heated, we should find that currents of air set in from all sides, rose up above it, and spread out when they reached the ceiling, descending again along the walls. The existence of these currents may be easily proved by sprinkling a handful of fine chaff about in the room. What is the reason of the circulation thus produced? The iron, unless it be extremely hot, as it is when melted by Mr. Bessemer's process, does not require the air in order to keep up its heat; and, in fact, the constant supply of fresh air cools it, as the metal gives away its own heat to the air as fast as the particles of the latter come in contact with it. Why, then, do the currents arise? Because the air, when heated, expands or gets lighter, and rises, leaving an empty space, or vacuum, where it was before. Then the surrounding cold air being elastic, forces itself into the open space, and gets heated in its turn.

From this we can see that there will be a constant tendency in the air to flow towards that point on the earth's surface where the temperature is highest—or, all other things being equal, to that point where the sun may be at that moment in the zenith. Accordingly, if the earth's surface were either entirely dry land, or entirely water, and the sun were continually in the plane of the equator, we should expect to find the direction of the great wind-currents permanent and unchanged throughout the year. The true state of the case is, however, that these conditions are very far from being fulfilled. Every one knows that the sun is not always immediately over the equator, but that he is at the tropic of Cancer in June, and at the tropic of Capricorn in December, passing the equator twice every year at the equinoxes. Here, then, we have one cause which disturbs the regular flow of the wind-currents. The effect of this is materially increased by the extremely arbitrary way in which the dry land has been distri-

buted over the globe. The Northern hemisphere contains the whole of Europe, Asia, and North America, the greater part of Africa, and a portion of South America; while in the Southern Hemisphere we only find the remaining portions of the two last-named continents, with Australia and some of the large islands in its vicinity. Accordingly, during our summer there is a much greater area of dry land exposed to the nearly vertical rays of the sun than is the case during our winter.

Let us see for a moment how this cause acts in modifying the direction of the wind-currents. We shall find it easier to make this intelligible if we take an illustration from observed facts. It takes about five times as much heat to raise a ton weight of water through a certain range of temperature, as it does to produce the same effect in the case of a ton of rock. Again, the tendency of a surface of dry land to give out heat, and consequently to warm the air above it, and cause it to rise, is very much greater than that of a surface of water of equal area. Hence we can at once see the cause of the local winds which are felt every day in calm weather in islands situated in hot climates. During the day the island becomes very hot, and thus what the French call a "courant ascendant" is set in operation. The air above the land gets hot and rises, while the colder air which is on the sea all round it flows in to fill its place, and is felt as a cool sea-breeze. During the night these conditions are exactly reversed: the land can no longer get any heat from the sun, as he has set, while it is still nearly as liberal in parting with its acquired heat as it was before. Accordingly, it soon becomes cooler than the sea in its neighbourhood; and the air, instead of rising up over it, sinks down upon it, and flows out to sea, producing a land-wind.

These conditions are, apparently, nearly exactly fulfilled in the region of the monsoons, with the exception that the change of wind takes place at intervals of six months, and not every twelve hours. In this district—which extends over the southern portion of Asia and the Indian Ocean—the wind for half the year blows from one point, and for the other half from that which is directly opposite. The winds are North-east and South-west in Hindustan; and in Java, at the other side of the equator, they are South-east and North-west. The cause of the winds—monsoons they are called, from an Arabic word, *mousim*, meaning season—is not quite so easily explained as that of the ordinary land and sea breezes to which we have just referred. Their origin is to be sought for in the temperate zone, and not between the tropics. The reason of this is that the districts towards which the air is sucked in are not those which are absolutely hottest, but those where the rarefaction of the air is greatest. When the air becomes lighter it is said to be rarefied, and this rarefaction ought apparently to be greatest where the temperature is highest. This would be the case if the air were the only constituent of our atmosphere. There is, however, a very important disturbing agent to be taken into consideration, viz. aqueous vapour. There is always, when it is not actually raining, a quantity of water rising from the surface of the sea and from every exposed water-surface, and mingling with the air. This

water is perfectly invisible : as it is in the form of vapour, it is true steam, and its presence only becomes visible when it is condensed so as to form a cloud. The hotter the air is, the more of this aqueous vapour is it able to hold in the invisible condition.

We shall naturally expect to find a greater amount of this steam in the air at places situated near the coast, than at those in the interior of continents, and this is actually the case. The amount of rarefaction which the dry air on the sea-coast of Hindustan undergoes in summer, is partially compensated for by the increased tension of the aqueous vapour, whose presence in the air is due to the action of the sun's heat on the surface of the Indian Ocean. In the interior of Asia there is no great body of water to be found, and the winds from the south lose most of the moisture which they contain in passing over the Himalayas. Accordingly the air here is extremely dry, and a compensation, similar to that which is observed in Hindustan, cannot take place. It is towards this district that the wind is sucked in, and the attraction is sufficient to draw a portion of the South-east trade-wind across the line into the Northern hemisphere. In our winter the region where the rarefaction is greatest is the continent of Australia ; and accordingly, in its turn, it sucks the North-east trade-wind of the Northern hemisphere across the equator. Thus we see that in the region which extends from the coast of Australia to the centre of Asia we have monsoons, or winds which change regularly every six months. As to the directions of the different monsoons, we shall discuss them when we have disposed of the trade-winds—which ought by rights, as Professor Dove observes, rather to be considered as an imperfectly developed monsoon, than the latter to be held as a modification of the former.

The origin of the trade-winds is to be sought for, as before, in the heating power of the sun, and their direction is a result of the figure of the earth, and of its motion on its axis. When the air at the equator rises, that in higher latitudes on either side flows in, and would be felt as a North wind or as a South wind respectively, if the earth's motion on its axis did not affect it. The figure of the earth is pretty nearly that of a sphere, and, as it revolves round its axis, it is evident that those points on its surface, which are situated at the greatest distance from the axis, will have to travel over a greater distance in the same time than those which are near it. Thus, for instance, London, which is nearly under the parallel of 50° , has only to travel about three-fifths of the distance which a place like Quito, situated under the equator, has to travel in the same time. A person situated in London is carried, imperceptibly to himself, by the motion of the earth, through 15,000 miles towards the eastward in the twenty-four hours ; while another at Quito is carried through 25,000 miles in the same time. Accordingly, if the Londoner, preserving his own rate of motion, were suddenly transferred to Quito, he would be left 10,000 miles behind the other in the course of the twenty-four hours, or would appear to be moving in the opposite direction, from East to West, at the rate of about 400 miles an hour. The case would be just as if a person were to be thrown into a railway carriage which was moving at full

speed; he would appear to his fellow-passengers to be moving in the opposite direction to them, while in reality the motion of progression was in the train, not in the person who was thrown into it. The air is transferred from high to low latitudes, but this change is gradual, and the earth, accordingly, by means of the force of friction, is able to retard its relative velocity before it reaches the tropics, so that its actual velocity, though still considerable, is far below 400 miles an hour.

This wind comes from high latitudes, and becomes more and more easterly, reaching us as a nearly true North-east wind; and as it gets into lower latitudes becoming more and more nearly East, and forming a belt of North-east wind all round the earth on the Northern side of the equator. In the Southern hemisphere, there is a similar belt of permanent winds, which are, of course, South-easterly instead of North-easterly. These belts are not always at equal distances at each side of the equator, as their position is dependent on the situation of the zone of maximum temperature for the time being. When we reach the actual district where the air rises, we find the easterly direction of the wind no longer so remarkable, as has been noticed by Basil Hall and others. The reason is, that by the time that the air reaches the district where it rises, it has obtained by means of its friction with the earth's surface a rate of motion round the earth's axis, nearly equal to that of the earth's surface itself.

The trade-wind zones, called, by the Spaniards, the "Ladies' Sea"—*El Golfo de las Damas*—because navigation on a sea where the wind never changed was so easy, shift their position according to the apparent motion of the sun in the ecliptic. In the Atlantic the North-east trade begins in summer in the latitude of the Azores; in winter it commences to the south of the Canaries.

In the actual trade-wind zones rain very seldom falls, any more than it does in these countries when the East wind has well set in. The reason of this is, that the air on its passage from high to low latitudes is continually becoming warmer and warmer. According as its temperature rises, its power of dissolving (so to speak) water increases also, and so it is constantly increasing its burden of water until it reaches the end of its journey, where it rises into the higher regions of the atmosphere, and there is suddenly cooled. The chilling process condenses, to a great extent, the aqueous vapour contained in the trade-wind air, and causes it to fall in constant discharges of heavy rain. Throughout the tropics the rainy season coincides with that period at which the sun is in the zenith, and in this region the heaviest rainfall on the globe is observed. The wettest place in the world, Cherrapoonjee, is situated in the Cossya Hills, about 250 miles North-east of Calcutta, just outside the torrid zone. There the rainfall is upwards of 600 inches in the year, or twenty times as much as it is on the West coasts of Scotland and Ireland. However, in such extreme cases as this, there are other circumstances to be taken into consideration, such as the position of the locality as regards mountain chains, which may cause the clouds to drift over one particular spot.

To return to the wind: When the air rises at the equatorial edge of

the trade-wind zone, it flows away above the lower trade-wind current. The existence of an upper current in the tropics is well known. Volcanic ashes, which have fallen in several of the West Indian Islands on several occasions, have been traced to volcanoes which lay to the westward of the locality where the ashes fell, at a time when there was no West wind blowing at the sea-level. To take a recent instance : ashes fell at Kingston, Jamaica, in the year 1835, and it is satisfactorily proved that they had been ejected from the volcano of Coseguina, on the Pacific shore of Central America, and must consequently have been borne to the Eastward by an upper current counter to the direction of the easterly winds which were blowing at the time at the sea-level.

Captain Maury supposes that when the air rises, at either side of the equator, it crosses over into the opposite hemisphere, so that there is a constant interchange of air going on between the Northern and Southern hemispheres. This he has hardly sufficiently proved, and his views are not generally accepted. One of the arguments on which he lays great stress in support of his theory is, that on certain occasions dust has fallen in various parts of Western Europe, and that in it there have been discovered microscopical animals similar to those which are found in South America. This appears to be scarcely an incontrovertible proof ; as Admiral Fitzroy observes :—“ Certainly such insects *may* be found in Brazil ; but does it follow that they are not also in Africa under nearly the same parallels ? ”

This counter-current, or “anti-trade,” as Sir J. Herschel has called it, is at a high level in the atmosphere between the tropics, far above the top of the highest mountains ; but at the exterior edge of the trade-wind zone, it descends to the surface of the ground. The Canary Islands are situated close to this edge, and accordingly we find that there is always a westerly wind at the summit of the Peak of Teneriffe, while the wind at the sea-level, in the same island, is easterly throughout the summer months. Professor Piazzi Smith, who lived for some time on the top of that mountain making astronomical observations, has recorded some very interesting details of the conflicts between the two currents, which he was able to observe accurately from his elevated position. In winter the trade-wind zone is situated to the south of its summer position in latitude, and at this season the South-west wind is felt at the sea-level in the Canary Islands. Similar facts to these have been observed in other localities where there are high mountains situated on the edge of the trade-wind zone, as, for instance, Mouna Loa in the Sandwich Islands. There can therefore be no doubt that the warm moist West wind which is felt so generally in the temperate zones, is really the air returning to the Poles from the equator, which has now assumed a South-west direction on its return journey, owing to conditions the reverse of those which imparted to it a North-east motion on its way towards the equator. This, then, is our South-west wind, which is so prevalent in the North Atlantic Ocean that the voyage from Europe to America is not unfrequently called the up-hill trip, in contra-distinction to the down-hill passage home. These are the

"brave West winds" of Maury, whose refreshing action on the soil he never tires of recapitulating.

The South-west monsoons of Hindustan, which blow from May to October, and the North-west monsoons of the Java seas, which are felt between November and April, owe their westerly motion to a cause similar to that of the anti-trades which we have just described. To take the case of the monsoons of Hindustan : we have seen above how the rarefaction of the air in Central Asia attracts the South-east trade-wind of the Southern hemisphere across the equator. This air, when it moves from the equator into higher latitudes, brings with it the rate of motion, to the eastward, of the equatorial regions which it has lately left, and is felt as a South-west wind. Accordingly, the directions of the monsoons are thus accounted for. In the winter months the true North-east trade-wind is felt in Hindustan ; while in the summer months its place is taken by the South-east trade of the Southern hemisphere, making its appearance as the South-west monsoon. In Java, conditions exactly converse to these are in operation, and the winds are South-east from April to November, and North-west during the rest of the year.

The change of one monsoon to the other is always accompanied by rough weather, called in some places the "breaking-out" of the monsoon ; just as with us the equinox, or change of the season from summer to winter, and *vice versa*, is marked by "Windy weather," or "Equinoctial gales."

The question may, however, well be asked, why there are no monsoons in the Atlantic Ocean ?

In the first place, the amount of rarefaction which the air in Africa and in Brazil undergoes, in the respective hot seasons of those regions, is far less considerable than that which is observed in Asia and Australia at the corresponding seasons.

Secondly, in the case of the Atlantic Ocean, the two districts towards which the air is attracted are situated within the torrid zone, while in the Indian Ocean they are quite outside the tropics, and in the temperate zones. Accordingly, even if the suction of the air across the equator did take place to the same extent in the former case as in the latter, the extreme contrast in direction between the two monsoons would not be perceptible to the same extent, owing to the fact that the same amount of westing could not be imparted to the wind, because it had not to travel into such high latitudes on either side of the equator. A tendency to the production of the phenomenon of the monsoons is observable along the coast of Guinea, where winds from the South and South-west are very generally felt. These winds are not really the South-east trade-wind, which has been attracted across the line into the Northern hemisphere. They ought rather to be considered as of the same nature as the land and sea breezes before referred to, since we find it to be very generally the case, that in warm climates the ordinary wind-currents undergo a deflection to a greater or less extent along a coast-line such as that of Guinea, Brazil, or the North of Australia.

Our readers may perhaps ask why it is, that when we allege that the

whole of the winds of the globe owe their origin to a regular circulation of the air from the Polar regions to the equator, and back again, we do not find more definite traces of such a circulation in the winds of our own latitudes? The answer to this is, that the traces of this circulation are easily discoverable if we only know how to look for them. In the Mediterranean Sea, situated near the Northern edge of the trade-wind zone, the contrast between the equatorial and Polar currents of air is very decidedly marked. The two conflicting winds are known under various names in different parts of the district. The Polar current, on its way to join the trade-wind, is termed the "Tramontane," in other parts the "Bora," the "Maestral," &c.; while the return trade-wind bringing rain is well known under the name of the "Sirocco." In Switzerland the same wind is called the "Föhn," and is a warm wind, which causes the ice and snow to melt rapidly, and constantly brings with it heavy rain.

In these latitudes, the contrast is not so very striking, but even here every one knows that the only winds which last for more than a day or two at a time are the North-east and the South-west winds, the former of which is dry and cold, the latter moist and warm. The difference between these winds is much more noticeable in winter than in summer, inasmuch as in the latter season Russia and the Northern part of Asia enjoy, relatively to the British islands, a much higher temperature than is the case in winter; so that the air which moves from those regions during the summer months does not come to us from a climate which is colder than our own, but from one which is warmer.

So far, then, we have attempted to trace the ordinary wind-currents, but as yet there are very many questions connected therewith which are not quite sufficiently explained. To mention one of these, we hear from many observers on the late Arctic expeditions, that the most marked characteristic of the winds in the neighbourhood of Baffin's Bay, is the great predominance of North-westerly winds. It is not as yet decided, nor can it ever be satisfactorily decided, how far to the northward and westward this phenomenon is noticeable. The question then is, Whence does this North-west wind come?

As to the causes of the sudden changes of wind, and of storms, they are as yet shrouded in mystery, and we cannot have much expectation that in our lifetime at least much will be done to unravel the web. Meteorology is a very young science—if it deserves the title of science at all—and until observations for a long series of years shall have been made at many stations, we shall not be in the possession of trustworthy facts on which to ground our reasoning. It is merely shoving the difficulty a step farther off to assign these irregular variations to atmospheric waves. It will be time enough to reason accurately about the weather and its changes, when we ascertain what these atmospheric waves are, and what causes them. Until the "astro-meteorologists" will tell us the principles on which their calculations are based, we must decline to receive their predictions as worthy of any credence whatever.

Willie Baird: a Winter Idyll.

An old man's tale, a tale for men grey-hair'd,
Who wear, thro' second childhood, to the Lord.

'Tis two-and-thirty summers since I came
To school the village lads of Inverglen.

My father was a shepherd old and poor,
Who, dwelling 'mong the clouds on norland hills,
His tartan plaidie on, and by his side
His sheep-dog running, redd'n'd with the winds
That whistle saltly south from Polar seas:
I follow'd in his footsteps when a boy,
And knew by heart the mountains round our home;
But when I went to Edinglass, to learn
At college there, I looked about the place,
And heard the murmur of the busy streets
Around me, in a dream;—and only saw
The clouds that snow around the mountain tops,
The mists that chase the phantom of the moon
In lonely mountain turns,—and heard the while,
Not footsteps sounding hollow to and fro,
But winds sough-soughing thro' the woods of pine.
Time passed; and day by day those sights and sounds
Grew fainter,—till they troubled me no more.

O Willie, Willie, are you sleeping sound?
And can you feel the stone that I have placed
Yonder above you? Are you dead, my doo?
Or did you see the shining Hand that parts
The clouds above, and becks the bonnie birds,
Until they wing away, and human eyes,
That watch them till they vanish in the blue,
Droop and grow tearful? Ay, I ken, I ken,
I'm talking folly, but I loved the child!
He was the bravest scholar in the school!
He came to teach the very dominie—
Me, with my lyart locks and sleepy heart!

O well I mind the day his mother brought
 Her tiny trembling tot with yellow hair,
 Her tiny poor-clad tot six summers old,
 And left him seated lonely on a form
 Before my desk. He neither wept nor gloom'd ;
 But waited silently, with shoeless feet
 Swinging above the floor ; in wonder eyed
 The maps upon the walls, the big black board,
 The slates and books and copies, and my own
 Gray hose and clumpy boots ; last, fixing gaze
 Upon a monster spider's-web that filled
 One corner of the whitewash'd ceiling, watch'd
 The speckled traitor jump and jink about,
 Till he forgot my unfamiliar eyes,
 Weary and strange and old. "Come here, my bairn ! "
 And timid as a lamb he seedled up.
 "What do they call ye ? " "Willie," coo'd the wean,
 Up-peeping slyly, scraping with his feet.
 I put my hand upon his yellow hair,
 And cheer'd him kindly. Then I bade him lift
 The small black bell that stands behind the door
 And ring the shouting laddies from their play.
 "Run, Willie ! " And he ran, and eyed the bell,
 Stoop'd o'er it, seemed afraid that it would bite,
 Then grasped it firm, and as it jingled gave
 A timid cry—next laughed to hear the sound—
 And ran full merry to the door and rang,
 And rang, and rang, while lights of music lit
 His pallid cheek, till, shouting, panting hard,
 In ran the big rough laddies from their play.

Then rapping sharply on the desk I drove
 The laddies to their seats, and beckon'd up
 The stranger—smiling, bade him seat himself
 And hearken to the rest. Two weary hours
 Buzz-buzz, boom-boom, went on the noise of school,
 While Willie sat and listen'd open-mouth'd ;
 Till school was over, and the big and small
 Flew home in flocks. But Willie stayed behind.
 I beckon'd to the mannoch with a smile,
 And took him on my knee and crack'd and talk'd.

First, he was timid ; next, grew bashful ; next,
 He warm'd and told me stories of his home,
 His father, mother, sisters, brothers, all ;
 And how, when strong and big, he meant to buy

A gig to drive his father to the kirk ;
 And how he longed to be a dominie :
 Such simple prattle as I plainly see
 You smile at. But to little children God
 Has given wisdom and mysterious power
 Which beat the mathematics. *Quærere*
Verum in sylvis Academi, Sir,
 Is meet for men who can afford to dwell
 For ever in a garden, reading books
 Of morals and the logic. Good and well !
 Give me such tiny truths as only bloom
 Like red-tipt gowans at the hallanstone,
 Or kindle softly, flashing bright at times,
 In fuffing cottage fires !

The laddie still
 Was seated on my knee, when at the door
 We heard a scrape-scare-scraping : Willie prick'd
 His ears and listen'd, then he clapt his hands—
 “ Hey ! Donald, Donald, Donald ! ” [See ! the rogue
 Looks up and blinks his eyes—he knows his name !]
 “ Hey, Donald, Donald ! ” Willie cried. At that,
 I saw beneath me, at the door, a Dog—
 The very collie dozing at your feet,
 His nose between his paws, his eys half closed.
 At sight of Willie, with a joyful bark
 He leapt and gamboll'd, eyeing me the while
 In queer suspicion ; and the mannoch peeped
 Into my face, while patting Donald's back—
 “ It's Donald ! he has come to take me home ! ”

An old man's tale, a tale for men gray-hair'd,
 Who wear, thro' second childhood, to the grave !
 I'll hasten on. Thenceforward Willie came
 Daily to school, and daily to the door
 Came Donald trotting ; and they homeward went
 Together—Willie walking slow but sure,
 And Donald trotting sagely by his side.
 [Ay, Donald, he is dead ! be still, old man !]

What link existed, human or divine,
 Between the tiny tot six summers old,
 And yonder life of mine upon the hills
 Among the mists and storms ? 'tis strange, 'tis strange !
 But when I look'd on Willie's face, it seemed
 That I had known it in some beauteous life

That I had left behind me in the north.
 This fancy grew and grew, till oft I sat—
 The school buzz-buzzing round me—and would seem
 To be among the mists, the tracks of rain,
 Nearling the hueless silence of the snow.
 Slowly and surely I began to feel
 That I was all alone in all the world,
 And that my mother and my father slept
 Far, far away, in some forgotten kirk—
 Remember'd but in dreams. Alone at nights,
 I read my Bible more and Euclid less.
 For, mind you, like my betters, I had been
 Half scoffer, half believer ; on the whole,
 I thought the life beyond a useless dream,
 Best left alone, and shut my eyes to things
 That puzzled mathematics. But at last
 When Willie Baird and I grew friends, and thoughts
 Came to me from beyond my father's grave,
 I found 'twas pleasant late at e'en to read
 My Bible—haply, only just to pick
 Some easy chapter for my pet to learn—
 Yet night by night my soul was guided on
 Like a blind man some angel hand convoys.

I cannot frame in speech the thoughts that filled
 This grey old brow, the feelings dim and warm
 That sooth'd the throbings of this weary heart !
 But when I placed my hand on Willie's head,
 Warm sunshine tingled from the yellow hair
 Thro' trembling fingers to my blood within ;
 And when I looked in Willie's stainless eyes
 I saw the empty ether floating gray
 O'er shadowy mountains murmuring low with winds ;
 And often when, in his old-fashion'd way,
 He question'd me, I seemed to hear a voice
 From far away, that mingled with the cries
 Haunting the regions where the round red sun
 Is all alone with God among the snow.

Who made the stars ? and if within his hand
 He caught and held one, would his fingers burn ?
 If I, the gray-hair'd dominie, was dug
 From out a cabbage garden such as he
 Was found in ? if, when bigger, he would wear
 Gray homespun hose and clumsy boots like mine,
 And have a house to dwell in all alone ?

Thus would he question, seated on my knee,
 While Donald (wheesht, old man !) stretched lyart limbs
 Under my chair, contented. Open-mouth'd
 He hearken'd to the tales I loved to tell
About Sir William Wallace and the Bruce,
 And the sweet lady on the Scottish throne,
 Whose crown was colder than a band of ice,
 Yet seem'd a sunny crown whene'er she smiled ;
 With many tales of genii, giants, dwarfs,
 And little folk, that play at jing-a-ring
 On beds of harebells 'neath the silver morn ;
 Stories and rhymes and songs of Wonder-land ;
 How Tammas Ercildoune in Elfland dwelt,
 How Galloway's mermaid comb'd her golden hair,
 How Tammas Thumb stuck in the spider's-web,
 And fought and fought, a needle for his sword,
 Dying his weapon in the crimson blood
 Of the foul traitor with the poison'd fangs !

And when we read the Holy Book, the child
 Would think and think o'er parts he loved the best ;
The draught of fish, the Child that sat so wise
In the great Temple, Herod's cruel law
To slay the weans, or—oftenest of all—
The crucifixion of the Good Kind Man
 Who loved the weans and was a wean himself.
 He speir'd of death ; and were the sleepers cold
 Down in the dark wet earth ? and was it God
 That put the grass and flowers in the kirk-yard ?
 What kind of dwelling-place was heaven above ?
 And was it full of flowers ? and were there schools
 And dominies there ? and was it far away ?
 Then, with a look that made your eyes grow dim,
 Clasping his wee white hands round Donald's neck,
 "Do doggies gang to heaven ?" he would ask ;
 "Would Donald gang ?" and keek'd in Donald's face,
 While Donald blink'd with meditative gaze,
 As if he knew full brawly what we said,
 And ponder'd o'er it, wiser far than we.
 But how I answer'd, how explain'd, these things,
 I know not. Oft I could not speak at all.
 Yet every question made me think of things
 Forgotten, puzzled so, and when I strove
 To reason puzzled me so much the more,
 That, flinging logic to the winds, I went
 Straight onward to the mark in Willie's way,

Took most for granted, laid down premises
 Of Faith, imagined, gave my wit the reins,
 And oft on nights at e'en, to my surprise,
 Felt palpably an angel's glowing face
 Glimmering down upon me, while mine eyes
 Dimm'd their old orbs with tears that came unbid
 To bear the glory of the light they saw.

So summer passed. Yon chestnut at the door
 Scatter'd its burnish'd leaves and made a sound
 Of wind among its branches. Every day
 Came Willie, seldom going home again
 Till near the sunset : wet or dry he came :
 Oft in the rainy weather carrying
 A big umbrella, under which he walked—
 A little fairy in a parachute,
 Blown hither, thither, at the wind's wild will.
 Pleased was my heart to see his pallid cheeks
 Were gathering rosy-posies, that his eyes
 Were softer and less sad. Then, with a gust,
 Old Winter tumbled shrieking from the hills,
 His white hair blowing in the wind.

The house

Where Willie's mother lives is scarce a mile
 From yonder hallan, if you take a cut
 Before you reach the village, crossing o'er
 Green meadows till you reach the road again ;
 But he who thither goes along the road
 Loses a reaper's mile. The summer long
 Wee Willie came and went across the fields :
 He loved the smell of flowers and grass, the sight
 Of cows and sheep, the changing stalks of wheat,
 And he was weak and small. When winter came,
 Still caring not a straw for wind or rain
 Came Willie and the collie ; till by night
 Down fell the snow, and fell three nights and days,
 Then ceased. The ground was white and ankle-deep ;
 The window of the school was threaded o'er
 With flowers of hueless ice—Frost's unseen hands
 Prick'd you from head to foot with tingling heat ;
 The shouting urchins, yonder on the green,
 Played snowballs. In the school a cheery fire
 Was kindled every day, and every day
 When Willie came he had the warmest seat,
 And every day old Donald, punctual, came
 To join us after labour in the lowe.

Three days and nights the snow had mistily fall'n.
 It lay long miles along the country-side,
 White, awful, silent. In the keen cold air
 There was a hush, a sleepless silentness,
 And mid it all, upraising eyes, you felt
 God's breath upon your face ; and in your blood,
 Though you were cold to touch, was flaming fire,
 Such as within the bowels of the earth
 Burnt at the bones of ice, and wreath'd them round
 With grass ungrown.

One day in school I saw,
 Through threaded window-panes, soft, snowy flakes,
 Swim with unquiet motion, mistily, slowly,
 At intervals ; but when the boys were gone,
 And in ran Donald with a dripping nose,
 The air was clear and gray as glass. An hour
 Sat Willie, Donald, and myself around
 The murmuring fire, and then with tender hand
 I wrapt a comforter round Willie's throat,
 Button'd his coat around him close and warnin',
 And off he ran with Donald, happy-eyed,
 And merry, leaving fairy prints of feet
 Behind him on the snow. I watch'd them fade
 Round the white curve, and, turning with a sigh,
 Came in to sort the room and smoke a pipe
 Before the fire. Here, dreamingly and alone,
 I sat and smoked, and in the fire saw clear
 The norland mountaine, white and cold with snow,
 That crumbled silently, and moved, and changed,—
 When suddenly the air grew sick and dark,
 And from the distance came a hollow sound,
 A murmur like the moan of far-off seas.

I started to my feet, look'd out, and knew
 The winter wind was whistling from the clouds
 To lash the snow-clothed plain, and to myself
 I prophesied a storm before the night.
 Then with an icy pain, an eldritch gleam,
 I thought of Willie ; but I cheer'd my heart,
 " He's home, and with his mother, long ere this ! "
 While thus I stood the hollow murmur grew
 Deeper, the wold grew darker, and the snow
 Rush'd downward, whirling in a shadowy mist.
 I walked to yonder door and opened it.
 Whirr ! the wind swung it from me with a clang,

And in upon me with an iron-like crash
 Swoop'd in the drift. With pinch'd sharp face I gazed
 Out on the storm ! Dark, dark was all ! A mist,
 A blinding, whirling mist, of chilly snow,
 The falling and the driven ; for the wind
 Swept round and round in clouds upon the earth,
 And birm'd the deathly drift aloft with moans,
 Till all was swooning darkness. Far above
 A voice was shrieking, like a human cry.

I closed the door, and turn'd me to the fire,
 With something on my heart—a load—a sense
 Of an impending pain. Down the broad lum
 Came melting flakes that hiss'd upon the coal ;
 Under my eyelids blew the blinding smoke,
 And for a time I sat like one bewitch'd,
 Still as a stone. The lonely room grew dark,
 The flickering fire threw phantoms of the snow
 Along the floor and on the walls around.
 The melancholy ticking of the clock
 Was like the beating of my heart. But, hush !
 Above the moaning of the wind I heard
 A quick scrape-scraping at the door ; my heart
 Stood still and listened ; and with that there rose
 An awsome howl, shrill as a dying screech,
 And scrape-scrape-scrape, the sound beyond the door !
 I could not think—I could not breathe—a dark,
 Awful foreboding gript me like a hand,
 As opening the door I gazed straight out,
 Saw nothing, till I felt against my knees
 Something that moved and heard a moaning sound—
 Then, panting, moaning, o'er the threshold leapt
 Donald the dog, alone, and white with snow.

Down, Donald ! down, old man ! Sir, look at him !
 I swear he knows the meaning of thy words,
 And tho' he cannot speak, his heart is full !
 See, now ! see, now ! he puts his cold black nose
 Into my palm and whines ! he knows, he knows !
 Would speak, and cannot, but he minds that night !

The terror of my heart seem'd choking me :
 Dumbly I started and wildly at the dog,
 Who gazed into my face and whined and moan'd,
 Loup'd at the door, then touched me with his paws,
 And lastly, gript my coat between his teeth,

And pulled and pulled—whiles growling, whining whiles—
Till fairly madden'd, in bewilder'd fear,
I let him drag me through the banging dör
Out to the whirling storm. Bareheaded, wild,
The wind and snow-drift beating on my face,
Blowing me hither, thither, with the dog,
I dashed along the road. What followed seemed
An eerie, eerie dream ! a world of snow,
A sky of wind, a whirling howling mist
Which swam around with hundred sickly eyes ;
And Donald dragging, dragging, beaten, bruised,
Leading me on to something that I feared—
An awful something, and I knew not what !
On, on, and further on, and still the snow
Whirling, the tempest moaning ! Then I mind
Of groping, groping in the shadowy light,
And Donald by me burrowing with his nose
And whining. Next a darkness, blank and deep !
But then I mind of tearing thro' the storm,
Stumbling and tripping, blind and deaf and dumb,
And holding to my heart an icy load
I clutch'd with freezing fingers. Far away—
It seem'd long miles on miles away—I saw
A yellow light—unto that light I tore—
And last, remember opening a door
And falling, dazzled by a blinding gleam
Of human faces and a flaming fire,
And with a crash of voices in my ears
Fading away into a world of snow.

When I awaken'd to myself, I lay
In my own bed at home. I started up
As from an evil dream and look'd around,
And to my side came one, a neighbour's wife,
Mother to two young lads I taught in school.
With hollow, hollow voice I question'd her,
And soon knew all : how a long night had pasted
Since, with a lifeless laddie in my arms,
I stumbled horror-stricken, swooning, wild,
Into a ploughman's cottage : at my side,
My coat between his teeth, a dog ; and how
Senseless and cold I fell. Thence, when the storm
Had passed away, they bore me to my home.
I listen'd dumbly, catching at the sense ;
But when the woman mention'd Willie's name,
And I was fear'd to phrase the thought that rose,

She saw the question in my tearless eyes
And told me—he was dead.

'Twould weary you
To tell the thoughts, the fancies, and the dreams
That weigh'd upon me, ere I rose in bed,
But little harm'd, and sent the wife away,
Rose, slowly drest, took up my staff and went
To Willie's mother's cottage. As I walked,
Though all the air was calm and cold and still,
The blowing wind and dazzled snow were yet
Around about. I was bewilder'd like !
Ere I had time to think I found myself
Beside a truckle bed, and at my side
A weeping woman. And I clench'd my hands,
And look'd on Willie, who had gone to sleep.

In death-gown white, lay Willie fast asleep,
His blue eyes closed, his tiny fingers clench'd,
His lips apart a wee as if he breath'd,
His yellow hair kalm'd back, and on his face
A smile—yet not a smile—a dim pale light
Such as the Snow keeps in its own soft wings.
Ay, he had gone to sleep, and he was sound !
And by the bed lay Donald watching still,
And when I look'd, he whined, but did not move.

I turn'd in silence, with my nails stuck deep
In my clench'd palms; but in my heart of hearts
I prayed to God. In Willie's mother's face
There was a cold and silent bitterness—
I saw it plain, but saw it in a dream,
And cared not. So I went my way, as grim
As one who holds his breath to slay himself.
What followed that is vague as was the rest :
A winter day, a landscape hush'd in snow,
A weary wind, a horrid whiteness borne
On a man's shoulder, shapes in black, o'er all
The solemn clanging of an iron bell,
And lastly me and Donald standing both
Beside a tiny mound of fresh-heap'd earth,
And while around the snow began to fall
Mistily, softly, thro' the icy air,
Looking at one another, dumb and old.

And Willie's dead!—that's all I comprehend—
Ay, bonnie Willie Baird has gone before :
The school, the tempest, and the eerie pain,
Seem but a dream,—and I am weary like.
I begged old Donald hard—they gave him me—
And we have lived together in this house
Long years with no companions. There's no need
Of speech between us. Here we dumbly bide,
But know each other's sorrow,—and we both
Feel weary. When the nights are long and cold,
And snow is falling as it falleth now,
And wintry winds are moaning, here I dream
Of Willie and the unfamiliar life
I left behind me on the norland hills!
“Do doggies gang to heaven?” Willie asked,
What learned Solomon of modern days
Can answer that? Yet here at nights I sit,
Reading the Book, with Donald at my side;
And stooping, with the Book upon my knee,
I sometimes gaze in Donald's patient eyes—
So sad, so human, though he cannot speak—
And think he knows that Willie is at peace,
Far far away beyond the norland hills,
Beyond the silence of the untrodden snow.

Isernia—I'Addio.

ON the 9th October we were assembled, as usual, before dawn in the General's ante-room in the Royal Palace of Caserta, sipping our coffee, and awaiting his coming, when a gentleman of some fifty years of age requested to be admitted to his presence. At that moment Garibaldi entered, dressed in his poncho, with his foulard on his shoulders; and the gentleman pouncing on him, began,—“Signor Dictator, I cannot make up my mind to return to Bojano without the asked-for aid.”

“Why, you told me yesterday that you had three thousand patriots armed and ready; surely these will suffice to quell reaction, and hinder it from spreading. A freed country ought to be able to preserve its freedom. You are major of the National Guard of the province—head the three thousand yourself!”

“Without the presence of your soldiers, without the leadership and authority of officers of your suite, and of the bravest of these, I could do nothing with them.”

“Were I to send battalions and officers every time a cry of fear reaches me from the Neapolitan provinces, Xerxes' army would not suffice. Defend yourselves by yourselves, I repeat.”

“Your refusal, Eccellenza, will cost you the territories of Molise and Matese, and very probably, the Abruzzi.”

“Your pertinacity will cost me my patience!”

Thrusting his hat over his eyes, the General cut short the conversation by moving towards the staircase; the gentleman followed, keeping a little behind to the left, stretching out his neck as if to examine the General's profile, and seize the first opportunity of returning to the charge. As we reached the court-yard the General stopped so suddenly that the gentleman found himself a step ahead.

“Get my spy-glass, Basso.”

“I have it, Generale!”

“Grant me a little indulgence,” chimed in the undaunted petitioner. “Place yourself in my position; the welfare of my country makes me importunate. You, who are a patriot *à priori*, can make allowance——”

“I have no time now, at any rate. You may return this evening.”

The gentleman disappeared; and taking the train to Santa Maria, we proceeded in a carriage to Sant' Angelo, and on foot climbed the steep mountain side. This was our daily pilgrimage. From the topmost peak of Sant' Angelo, Garibaldi, with assiduous care, watched the enemy's movements, and planned the passage across the river in order to fling himself between Capua and Gaeta, divide the Bourbon army, and conquer

it—to-day on the Volturno, to-morrow on the Garigliano. Our appearance on the summit that morning was hailed by a more than usually vigorous salute from howitzers, cannons, and carbines. On the opposite side of the Volturno, which runs at the foot of the mountain, the enemy had planted two howitzers to our left, two rifled cannon in front, and sharpshooters behind the earthworks thrown up along the river. Later in the day a sharp skirmish took place between the outposts inside the Capuan gates, and after a long series of assaults and retreats, which we watched from our pinnacle—whence Garibaldi sent orders and aid—we suddenly saw the enemy in full flight towards the bastions before the red shirts, who followed in hot pursuit, and made their own the line of outposts which the royalists had hitherto occupied. This fact confirmed my hopes of a speedy siege of Capua, as the lines just won rendered the approach less difficult; and in the evening—gathered as usual in our room adjoining the General's—N., M., Z., C. and myself discussed, as a certainty, the long-desired event. In the midst of our conversation entered Colonel P.—his eyes sparkling, his step so jaunty that it was evident he came to announce news pleasant to himself. Now P. was for the time being head of the Staff, and being an ardent partisan of the House of Savoy and restricted liberty, it troubled him exceedingly that men of republican opinions should be near the general, to whom he was sincerely attached, and would fain have cured of his democratic tendencies. Hence C. and myself were perpetual eyesores to him, and consequently came in for more than our due share of night-watches and other disagreeables. He was passionately fond of political discussions, and frequented our circle with praiseworthy constancy in the hopes of making converts to his creed. His ideas were quite original, as he owed nothing to literature. The Italian that he spoke was mixed with Genoese, the syntax was all his own—tenses, genders, and numbers gave him no concern—his orders of the day were orthographical curiosities, his own name being minus one of the *g's* to which it was entitled. So what with the difference in our politics and the half suspicion that we were always quizzing him, there was such a gulf between us that it was impossible that tidings acceptable to him should be pleasant to us.

We had not much time to speculate, for, in jocund tones, he informed us that the "gentleman of Bojano" had induced the General to grant the aid implored; that Nullo was to head the expedition, composed of two battalions of volunteers and twelve mounted guides, while Captain Z. and myself were to go as aides-de-camp. The snapping of a violin-string, in the midst of a melodious motive, could not have offended the ear more than did this announcement. Capua besieged by our comrades, while we were on the barren crests of the Apennines giving chase to outlawed peasants! A pleasant prospect truly, and still more painful was the separation, for ever so short a time, from Garibaldi. The thorn was ours, the rose was P.'s, who rubbed his hands with glee at the thought of having removed us, even temporarily, from the General's side.

Major C., seated in a corner of the room with Mingon, his orderly, friend, comrade, and fellow-citizen, now turned to us, and with affectionate and persuasive words tried to reconcile us to our fate. "Cheer up, lads! what naust be, must; you'll be back in time for Capua, take my word for it."

"Bravo, C.!" said Colonel P., who did not seem to have observed him before; "that's good advice, and I'm sure you'll be glad to hear that the General assented to my proposal that you should accompany them!"

C. started as though he had been shot, drew himself bolt upright, then sank back into his chair, and turning his languid eyes on his faithful Achates, murmured,—"Ciu Mingon!" and Mingon—"Sangue di Signor!"

The irresistible hilarity produced by this picture was balsam to the wound inflicted on us by P., and in C.'s company, the expedition looked less gloomy. He was a universal favourite, though we did laugh at him unmercifully. A twenty years' conspirator, now an exile, now a prisoner; a soldier in all the wars of Italian independence, member of the Roman Constituent Assembly—he possessed our affection and esteem, but gravity was out of the question; and now, as he rose and slowly advanced towards us with the evident intention of addressing the colonel, we watched open-mouthed. Placing himself right in front of P.—"Really," he began, "I—can scarcely tell—I don't know whether I make my meaning clear—it is unjust—that is—I go of course—still it seems to me—just for the sake of the thing—suppose you had proposed yourself it seems, if I don't mistake—good occasion to distinguish yourself—discipline of course—Ciu Mingon, let's go to bed." And he left the room, and we followed, our irritation returning with double force as we found ourselves alone.

I found Pietro Bergamo, my orderly, awaiting orders. "Have the horses saddled by six, put my railway rug under the saddle, and hire a good two-horse carriage for the same hour." And so saying, I flung myself on the bed, and slept till dawn, when we started for Maddaloni, where the two battalions were stationed.

Raw recruits, who had never seen fire, their appearance did not offer much chance of a brilliant undertaking. "If I had but half the number of our Lombards," sighed Nullo, as he started them on their march for Bojano.

We followed in the carriage. The Matese and Molise districts on the opposite slopes of the Apennines—which we crossed till we reached Campobasso, and recrossed to gain Bojano—form the ancient country of that warlike and formidable race which humbled Rome in the proudest days of the republic. Laying aside the cares of war, we loosened the reins of our imagination more than once during the journey, which seemed more like an archaeological pilgrimage than a military march. Rubbing up our memories of Livy, Micali, and Niebuhr, we knit together legends and traditions, reconstructed cities, temples, laws, and institutions, and collocated them on the barren and desolate crests of those mountains,

bounded by Campania, Puglia, Lucania, where once two millions of Samnites flourished, and where now scarcely half a million of *cafones** drag on a miserable existence. I maintained that, despite their degeneracy, these *cafones* were the direct descendants of the Samnites. Z., just fresh from college, deluged us with erudition to prove the impossibility of my theory. Nullo gravely listened, or interposed some drily comic sentence in Bergamasco; while C., as usual, kept us in a constant roar, and to revenge himself, often turned the laugh on me for what he called my inexhaustible store of "analogous facts."

Arrived at Ponte Landolfo, the tax-gatherer, a warm partisan of the new order of things, welcomed us to his house, and gave us some very clear notions of the actual state of affairs. Isernia, he informed us, was occupied by two thousand royal soldiers and gendarmes; round this nucleus two or three thousand *cafones* had clustered, extending their operations some twenty miles from the centre. Divided into squadrons headed by gendarmes, they kept the mountain sand sent emissaries into the remotest village to organize fresh squadrons—who carried on at the same time the culture of their lands. "These," said our host, "are the most formidable; when you come upon them busy with their pickaxes and spades, you would not suspect them of sinister designs; but be on your guard, for at a given signal they will muster by paths unknown save to themselves, and fall upon you in large and well-organized bands. Have you cannon?" "No." "Then you must procure a couple. That alone intimidates them." So much did he insist on this as an absolute necessity, that Nullo ordered me to return to Caserta and ask Garibaldi for the cannon. Convinced of the futility of such a request, I obeyed, went, argued, pleaded, demonstrated the necessity, and returned without the cannon.

At Bojano, a town twenty miles from Isernia, instead of the three thousand armed patriots promised by the "gentleman" whom we had caught in the act of escaping to Naples, and had forced to precede us, with great difficulty we mustered thirty of the National Guard. Even these he refused to lead, alleging that "it was below the dignity of a major to assume the command of thirty men." On the morrow we proceeded towards Isernia, unearthed a band of *cafones* who had entrenched themselves in Cantalupo, and at two P.M. reached Castel-Petroso, a village perched on the summit of the mountain, which we found literally deserted. Major C., mindful of the tax-gatherer's warning, proposed that we should halt. "No," said Nullo; "we will go on to Pettorano, that village on the crest of that cone-like mountain yonder, which is but two miles from Isernia. I hear that Scott is marching from Capua with four thousand men; we must fling ourselves on the enemy before their reinforcements reach them. Bojano forms our natural basis of operations. If they menace

* *Cafone*, as our coachman informed us, is the name given to the tillers of the soil; *giantissimi*, to the proprietors.

our flank we can transport it thence to Castel di Sangro, and form the Piedmontese vanguard ; if attacked on our front with irresistible force, we can still return to Bojano, making a stand at Castel-Petroso."

After a short discussion, this go-ahead doctrine of course prevailed, and we went on to a little inn at the foot of the mountain of Pettorano. Here I gave my horse an ample feed of corn, with a sort of presentiment that I should stand in need of his best services. At four P.M. we entered Pettorano. From Cantalupo to Pettorano runs a steep Alpine gorge, some thirteen miles in length, convergent as far as Castel-Petroso, where it is crossed by the highroad ; then running parallel on one side to Pettorano, on the other to Carpinone. Here it widens into the valley where Isernia is situate, overlooked by the mountain of Pettorano, on which we stood, on one side, and on the other by Carpinone. Sending Major C. back to the inn with sixty men, giving half a battalion to Z., with which to man the heights of Carpinone, Nullo ordered me to range 600 on the hills of Pettorano, which extends one of its spurs towards Isernia. This done, I threw out half a company across the gorge to keep open the communications between myself and Z. At half-past four, the evening's manœuvres from Isernia commenced. A battalion of gendarmes marched along the highroad and the lateral fields, accompanied by half a squadron of cavalry and a flock of casones.

In order to animate our men, Nullo bid me collect the guides and our orderlies. We were eighteen in all. Descending from Pettorano, we were joined by Major C. and Mingon, and galloped towards the enemy along the highroad. Our soldiers posted at Carpinone clapped their hands, and cries of enthusiasm echoed by those at Pettorano rent the air as we dashed into the midst of the royalists, who gave way in disorder. "Turn back ! turn back ! Cafones on the mountain !" suddenly shouted our men from Carpinone ; but we continued to charge, when we were greeted on our flank by a volley of musketry from the farthest slope of Pettorano, where I had posted 200 men. Nullo was at a loss to understand how that important position had been taken without a struggle, and fearing to lose Pettorano, decided on returning to the town. Meanwhile, a sharp conflict raged between our horsemen and the casones, who, hidden behind the trees, peppered us at a few paces' distance. Ensign Bettoni, wounded in the leg, was carried back to our little ambulance at the inn, while we, spurring our horses up the olive slopes, fell on the casones with swords and revolvers, and, with the assistance of some of the soldiers, who descended from Carpinone, and the half company thrown across the gorge, succeeded in routing them. Nullo, leaving me with these to pursue them, returned with the major and the guides to Pettorano, bidding me act as circumstances should dictate. With 150 soldiers I pursued the fugitives : the repulse of the gendarmes, our daring charge, the retreat of the casones, and our hot pursuit, had disorganized the enemy's ranks. Yet twice they faced about, and attempted to make a stand, but our men repulsed them at the point of the bayonet, and succeeded in detaching a portion,

from the main body, who, by the highroad, gained Isernia. I was tempted to enter with them, but, uncertain as to the spirit of the inhabitants, and unwilling to put my men to too severe a test, I decided on taking possession of the line of hills which bounds the plains and overhangs Isernia. On my right the highroad branching leads here to Isernia, there to Castel di Sangro; and I felt satisfied with my decision, because, having cleared it of the enemy, I had rendered it possible for Nullo to carry out his idea of changing his base of operations if necessary.

Evening was now drawing nigh, and I had received no further instructions from Nullo—so leaving a captain in command, I resolved to ride back and acquaint him with the position of affairs. A continued crash of musketry from Pettorano disturbed my ride, but I concluded that our recruits were, as usual, wasting their powder and shot; and gaining the road, I met, about a mile from the inn, a squadron of our men and some provision waggons. They seemed disorganized and confused, and insisted that we were beaten by the royalists. I reassured them by asserting that it was we who had repulsed the enemy, and that the day was ours. Just where the road, after winding from the base of Pettorano to the left and crossing the gorge, winds to the right at the foot of Carpinone, and thence keeps straight on to Castel-Petroso, groans as of dying men met my ear, and by the light of the stars I could distinguish some dark masses on the white stony road. Dismounting, I found a heap of dead and dying, who I concluded must have fallen in our recent combat. I knelt by the sufferers, promised to send succour and transports, but for all answer the death-rattle sounded in my ear. Continuing my ride, similar sights recurring, I began to think that some fresh and terrible conflict must have taken place while I had been leading the van towards Isernia. Burning with anxiety I reached the inn, knocked, shouted, entered, ran from room to room: the place was deserted. "So!" I thought, "the host has fled, and all our people must be in Pettorano; but it's strange that they have not left a picket nor even a sentinel on guard." Then I recrossed the road, and commenced the ascent towards Pettorano, chasing away the gloomy thoughts which were gathering. Half-way up the hill I met a shepherd with his flock, just returning from the adjacent pastures, who to all my inquiries returned a sullen "I know nothing," and turned on his heel. Hastening on with increasing anxiety, a peasant descending crossed my path, and cocking my revolver, I asked,—

"Are you from Pettorano?"

"Signore."

"Are our Garibaldians, the red shirts, there?"

"No."

"No? Tell me the truth, or I'll send a bullet down your throat."

"Signore, the village is full of the soldiers and gendarmes of King Francesco, who are eating and drinking merrily."

"But where are the Garibaldians?"

"Surrounded and defeated by the soldiers and inhabitants; an hour

before dark the horsemen retreated by the main road in the direction of Bojano, and the foot soldiers took to the mountains."

These words, coupled with the absence of instructions from Nullo—the dead and dying left on the road, the musketry heard, the deserted inn—confirmed my worst fears; still I continued,—“Where are the *cafones*?”

“Encamped on the mountains along the road between Pettorano and Castel-Petroso.”

“How many?”

“I don’t know their precise numbers; but from two to three thousand, certainly.”

“You are deceiving me. I shall have to kill you. Precede me to Pettorano.”

“Stop!” cried the man. “I assure you I have told the truth, and that you are going to certain death. Had I wished to deceive you, I should say let us go.”

“Go yourself, then, and verify, and swear to me on the host to return and tell the truth; then I will give you two crowns.”

He swore and went, and in about twenty minutes returned to confirm the terrible story. Giving him the two crowns, I shook his hand and thanked him, marvelling at my luck in having fallen in with an honest *cafone*. He counselled me to abandon my horse, and follow the mountain paths to Bojano; but anxious only for the soldiers confided to me, I rode back towards Isernia. At no great distance I met them terrified, disorganized, diminished. They informed me that shortly after my departure an overwhelming force had appeared, driving them from the hills, and pursuing them for nearly two miles. Vainly I endeavoured to induce them to accompany me; natives of Malise and Matese, they knew the mountain paths towards Bojano, and I alone pursued the highroad. A damp, foul miasma rose from the marshes in the gorge; and as I had been suffering from malignant fever since September, I took the precaution to take my railway rug from under the saddle, and use it as a cloak. A mile farther on, I saw a huge black mass, resembling a barricade, but as it moved, I concluded it must be a detachment of the enemy. Presently I heard the “Chi va là?” and replying, “Viva l’Italia!” spurred my horse into a gallop. “Halt, halt, we are friends!” and I came up with some of our own disbanded troops; while from a ledge some six feet above the road a cry of, “Ah, Signor Padrone! Padrone mio!” was accompanied by the descent of a horse and rider—which feat, strange to say, was accomplished without any broken bones. Clinging to me, with a voice broken by emotion, Pietro, my orderly, (for it was he,) could only exclaim, “Signor Alberto, my master, alive! Ah, now I am happy!”

Allowing them to indulge in their favourite habit of speaking all at once, I presently induced them to talk one at a time. Some of them, it seems, had been on the heights of Pettorano, some at the inn: Pietro had remained with the staff. While the gendarmes and *cafones* were

marching from Isernia on our front in a semicircle—the left wing touching the mountain of Carpinone, the right resting on the slopes of Pettorano, the centre figuring in second line—it seems that a second corps of gendarmes, issuing from the opposite gate of Isernia, had, by secret paths, gained Pettorano, and were sustained in their entrance by the right wing of the first corps. The position was easily taken during our cavalry charge, for the raw troops, between two fires, and in the absence of officers who would have kept them to their duty, fled precipitately. They were unable to descend to the main road and join their comrades, because three thousand cafones—who had gathered from the farther slopes of the double line of mountains—occupied the space between them. Hence the disorderly band, menaced on every side, had scrambled up to a crag in the faint hope of gaining a place of safety. Meanwhile Nullo and his suite were returning to Pettorano, but on reaching the inn had found it occupied by a strong band of gendarmes and cafones, who from the windows and garden shot at them with murderous effect. The sixty ousted from the inn had fought valiantly to open out for themselves a path, but failing, sought to join the men still encamped at Carpinone. Nullo, Major C., and six guides, left alone, spurred their horses into the enemy's midst, and by dint of superhuman efforts made themselves a passage; but farther on they had come upon the three thousand cafones, and no one knew what their fate had been. Pietro, separated from them in the fray, had led his horse up the mountain side, and over bluffs and crags had managed to reach the spot where I found him. The horror of our position did not consist in the prospect of almost certain death, but in the mode thereof: for the cafones gave no quarter, and whoever fell into their hands, even if wounded, was slowly tortured to death.

During the recital I had weighed probabilities and taken my resolve. "Surrounded as we are," I began, "by an enemy who outnumbers us a hundred times, surrender is useless, as surrender means torture and death: moreover, Garibaldians never surrender. We are lost, but it remains to us to suffer with honour or with infamy. The enemy by this time has gained Castel-Petroso, where he will await the fugitive remnants of our legion to slaughter them at dawn. This desperate state of affairs ought at least to inspire us with the courage of despair. I propose that we force our passage to Castel-Petroso with the bayonet. I will head the column. United and resolute, some of us may come out alive. The path of honour is also the only chance of safety. Avanti!"

Warmed by my speech, they fell into their ranks and followed me, though somewhat slowly; and after a short march, we came on a carriage upset by the roadside. It was the one I had hired at Caserta. The coachman was writhing in the agonies of death; and at a little distance were several corpses completely stripped. We struck a light, and recognized Bettoli, of Cremona, wounded in the morning; Lavagnolo, of Udina; both guides; one of the major's orderlies, and several others whom I did not know—all hacked to pieces with cold steel.

This sad spectacle had a most disanimating effect on our little band; still they kept on: I exhausting my eloquence, and Pietro occasionally assisting me with the butt-end of his musket. As we neared Castel-Petroso we could see lights in the windows. Built near the summit of the mountain, it is a long winding town, with the highroad running through. And here two thousand casones were entrenched. At a sudden turn in the ascent we were greeted by a shower of stones. My men halted, while I replied to the enemy's "Chi va là?" "Viva Garibaldi;" which answer was hailed by a musket-shot, that served as a summons to the entire band. "Avanti per l'Italia!" I shouted, placing myself at the head of the column; but a fresh hailstorm made them halt, a gunshot dispersed them, and Pietro and I were left alone.

"Are you coming, Pietro?"

"I am here, Padrone." And with a mental adieu to my wife, I spurred my horse into a gallop.

The enemy, lining the mountain ridge that overhangs the town from end to end, awaited us with pointed guns. A volley of shots greeted our entrance, and on turning round a shower of balls fell close to us. Pietro, who rode at my left, thought proper to wheel to my right, and, in effecting this manœuvre, knocked my foot out of the stirrup; nor did he better his own condition, as the balls now whistled on all sides, and one continued jet of burning cartridges flew across us. In addition to the constant turnings, a steep descent compelled us to slacken our pace, and gave the enemy a better chance. Ever impatient of fire, my horse, probably penetrated with the gravity of the situation, had put on his considering cap, and flew onward swift as an arrow. Pietro kept his sword unsheathed, I my revolver at full-cock, in case of a direct assault on the road; while with the hand that held the reins I grasped my railway rug, balancing it on the horse's neck, as though the possibility of fever even then had a greater hold upon my imagination than the almost certainty of instant death. The casones, enraged at their failure, redoubled their efforts, accompanying their shots with diabolic shouts; and I distinctly heard women's voices.

Towards the end of the town the road opens out into a semicircle, then winds up another mountain, and here the fire slackened. A dead horse encumbered the path. Pietro passed without difficulty, but my more sensitive steed drew back, shied, and reared. The enemy rushed after us, and thundered away madly. At last the logic of spurs overcame the sentimentality of the ill-advised beast, who bounded over the carcase, thus saving my life and his own, and by degrees we out-distanced our assailants.

"Per Dio!" exclaimed Pietro, "I shouldn't have performed that feat save by your side, Padrone."

We lit our cigars, still on the look-out: the thought of our own safety embittered by the remembrance of our murdered comrades, our ignorance of the fate of the remainder, and the certainty of defeat—an experience as new to us as it was bitter.

We reached Bojano after midnight, and dismounting at the house of the

"gentleman," found him in bed, as pale as a corpse, in momentary expectation of a cafonic invasion. "Where are our officers?" I exclaimed. He pointed to a door—which I entered, and found Nullo and Sottocasa snugly in bed. We regarded each other as apparitions. The major had just gone to Campobasso to telegraph to the Dictator; of Z. nothing was known; half of the guides had perished, and but a slender portion of the column had as yet reached Bojano. "An hour before sunset," continued Nullo, "surrounded on all sides, we fought our way through our assailants in front of the inn, kept the highroad, under a rattling fire ten paces from us, for five consecutive miles, trampling under our horses' hoofs and wounding all who attempted to cross our path. The infamous assassins cut to pieces Bettoni, Lavagnolo, and one or two others of our wounded, together with C.'s orderly (not Mingon), who accompanied them in the ambulance carriage."

"We came upon them stripped and left upon the road."

"Mori," he went on, "had his horse killed under him, and just as he was seizing another by the tail he was hewn down and stoned to death. Our little band fought calmly and bravely; but so fearful were the odds that even now it seems fabulous that any should have escaped."

"I wonder," said I, "that the cunning boors did not barricade the streets; I expect that we owe our safety to this omission, and to their eagerness to kill only the riders, and spare the horses; also because the rapidity of our course hindered them from taking proper aim."

"They killed my horse at any rate," said Sottocasa—"just outside Castel-l'Petroso—and I fell with my leg under his belly. There I lay for some time, watching the cafones come and go, kill the fallen, and lie in ambush for fresh victims. At last the poor beast rolled over in his death-struggles, and I dragged out my bruised and benumbed limbs, and crawled to the edge of the valley, and then on here."

It was now my turn to recount my adventures, and we could not resist a laugh over my imaginary despatch to Nullo,—"*The enemy repulsed to Isernia, the heights occupied by our men, the road open to Castel di Sangro.*"

At two A.M. we bade each other good-night. After fasting sixteen hours in the saddle, we needed no rocking. I fell asleep on the sofa in the act of undressing, and in the morning found one leg still booted and trowsersed. During the night fresh arrivals, and at noon, to our great joy, Captain Z. made his appearance. Taking fifty men, the remnants of the half battalion with which he had garrisoned Carpinone, he had attempted to join the staff during their conflict in front of the inn. Failing in this, he fought his way up to an inaccessible peak; and during the night, by dint of skilful evolutions and repeated skirmishes, through woods and valleys, rocks and mountain crests, succeeded in guiding about two-thirds in safety to Bojano.

At two P.M. Nullo reviewed his shrunken battalions: two hundred were missing at the roll-call, and six of the fourteen officers detached from the Dictator's Staff.



"Why are you all sitting so far off?" said the Dictator to N., M., Z., C. and myself, seated at the bottom of the dinner-table at Caserta the day after our return from the unsuccessful expedition to Isernia. Disgusted with the fulsome importunity of certain officers in scrambling for the places near him, we invariably chose the farthest; but now, at his invitation, we moved up. "Come, I want to hear all about Isernia," he continued. And knowing him to be impatient of long speeches, I told the story in the fewest possible words, C. helping me out by his original way of showing up the comic parts of the tragedy. The general had, as a matter of course, received a regular report from Nullo, the chief of the expedition; but he chose to take that opportunity of showing that he was satisfied with our conduct, vanquished though we were.

"It was thus the Roman Senate went to meet Varrone defeated at Cannæ, and congratulate him on not despairing of the republic," I said.

"An analogous fact," whispered C.

"Your ill-fortune," observed Marquis T., "has been atoned for by the victor of Macerone, whom our General, in his late proclamation, bid us welcome as a brother."

"Let us hope that he won't turn out to be Abel's brother," I rejoined.

"There's your unfailing spice of republican spite."

"That's as it may be; but you can't deny that this way of entering your house without knocking at the door, coupled with the manifesto of the King of Piedmont to the people of the Two Sicilies, is an insult to the Dictator and to the populations freed by him. The King admits that he has neither been summoned by the one nor the other, but simply by a few municipalities and aristocrats, to restore order."

"Farini wrote the manifesto," said Garibaldi, rising to put an end to the discussion, which was growing warm; "and the King, in good faith, must have signed without reading it."

On the following morning an aide-de-camp informed Garibaldi that Bixio's division awaited him in the palace court-yard. He descended, and we followed to listen to the report of the doings of that valorous division in the decisive battle of the 1st October. Drawn up in battalions, they covered half of the immense cortile; Garibaldi and Bixio, with their respective staff, forming a fine group in the front. I was ordered to read the report, but my voice could not be heard beyond the second battalion: so the stentorian lungs of a brother officer were called in requisition. At first we listened with little interest to the usual accounts of special deeds of valour commented on and praised; but when the page was turned, and we heard the names of five officers branded as cowards, we were seized with painful stupor. But three of the five were present, and these were ordered to the front. It seemed to me that the physical action of the thousand eyes bent on them must petrify and root them to the spot; and as they came up, all in the prime of youth, my knees trembled and my heart beat with such violence that I was forced to lean upon my sword. Knowledge of the weakness of human nature, the belief that a sudden panic may

assail even a brave man, the solemnity of the punishment, the inflexible severity of Garibaldi's face and bearing, filled me with anguish and pity. Better to die a thousand deaths than live to hear Garibaldi's lips pronounce the words, *You are a coward.* Yet the punishment was as necessary as it was terrible. Absolute silence reigned for a few seconds as the three culprits stood before him and the awestruck battalions. Then turning from them with a lightning flash of scorn, he said to the marquis, "Take away their swords," and to Nullo, "Strip them of the emblems of their rank." T. disarmed them, while Nullo flung the torn silver bands to the ground. And the trio stood motionless, while Garibaldi, inspired by the situation, harangued the entire division with antique eloquence. Then turning to the three petrifactions, his hand uplifted as though invoking curses on their heads, he said, "For you, nothing is left but to beg for a musket and get killed in the foremost ranks." On the morrow their names, dishonoured for ever, were published in the official gazette.

The sensations left by that painful scene lasted for days—prolonged as they were by a repetition, with less imposing forms, in the Dictator's apartment, whence he expelled several officers who had fled from Caserta at the sudden irruption of the Bourbon column which we had separated from the main body in Caserta Vecchia, on the 2nd October.

On the evening of the 25th, Colonel P. said to me:—"At dawn we cross the Volturno. You will hold yourself at my disposition."

"Detached from Garibaldi?"

"Detached from Garibaldi," he repeated, with evident gusto, knowing how unpalatable were his words.

The night was pitch-dark, and it was with the utmost difficulty that, scrambling through the vineyards where the Milan and Eber's brigades bivouacked, I succeeded in grouping them according to P.'s instructions, and guided the former up to the column commanded by Pietro Balsami. He then bid me return, and guide Eber to the opposite bank of the Volturno.

"You had better keep to the road," I said, at parting; "the dykes are deep and treacherous."

"I know the ground," he answered, and kept his path along the fields.

I returned to Eber, and with ordered arms we waited till dawn for the passage of Bixio's division, which was to cross before us. Worn out with fatigue I fell asleep in the saddle, and would have given a Peru for six feet of earth on which to lie. I dozed, nodded, and woke with a start, only to nod and dose off again; and finally, not awakening in time, found myself rolling in the dust. During that campaign I had, like most of my comrades, been scorched by the Calabrian sun during the day, frozen by night on the summit of the Apennines, famished, athirst, and exhausted by marches; but I came to the conclusion that of all physical privations want of sleep is the most intolerable. The salutary fall wakened me thoroughly, and I was shaking off the dust when my wife appeared on the road, accompanying a litter.

"A patient already?" I asked.

"Yes; Colonel P."

"Colonel P!" I cried; "why, what has happened?" And hastening to the litter I had great difficulty in recognizing in the inanimate mass, the torn and swollen face, the form and features of the unfortunate head of the Staff, and I felt smitten with remorse at having tormented him so often.

"He was crossing the fields," answered my wife, "and fell into a deep ditch hidden by brambles. There seems little hope of saving him. We are sending him back to the hospital of Santa Maria. I suppose the Dictator expects a battle; he has given such unusually precise orders for the general ambulance to cross the Volturno."

"A bad omen," thought I, "for the so-long-desired passage of the river. Let us hope that the Garibaldian army will not fall into the bramble-hidden pit dug for it by the pioneers of the Sardinian king."

On either side of the Volturno the country is furrowed by dyke-like roads, which wind like arteries through the plain, and centering in Capua, had greatly facilitated the enemy's movements. It was precisely by one of these arteries that a band of royalists, escaping the notice of Medici's division, gained the summit of Mount Angelo on the 1st October, and made a formidable attack on Garibaldi's rear while he was engaged with another column in front. Any other captain would have been taken prisoner, and the bare possibility paled the cheeks of his soldiers; but their fears were soon calmed by the General himself, who, turning on them his reassuring smile, said quietly, "Those men are our prisoners." By a flank movement, assisted by the preconcerted arrival of one of Sacchi's brigades from San Leuccio, he compelled the rash band to recede farther and further from their own lines, and on the morrow to lay down their arms.

When it came to our turn to take our place in the general march, I, in my quality of guide and staff officer, rode at the left of Brigadier E., and the first question he put to me was—

"Where is the bridge?"

"The bridge!" thought I to myself; "yes, there must be a bridge—but where?" The rear of Bixio's division was already out of sight, for the road which we were ascending, winding round the base of St. Angelo, shut out the view of the tract of country lying below, and no one had ever told me that there was a bridge—much less where. Either I must confess my ignorance, and submit to become ridiculous in my double quality of staff captain and guide, or I must make a guess. And if, after all, there were no bridge? I must pass for an ignoramus, or a liar. Neither one nor the other, suggested my master, Lord Bacon. Induction will help me out of this mess. The river is crossed: therefore a bridge there must be. On yonder bank there is no sign of the enemy; on this side, as far as eye can reach, no trace of our army: therefore the bridge must be situate precisely where the mountain hides the banks. These reflections made in the twinkling of an eye, I replied, pointing downwards—

"The bridge is there!"

After this Baonic affirmation, I felt more dead than alive ; but in less than ten minutes the road descending brought us in sight of the bridge—at which I, like the wise men when they saw the star, rejoiced with exceeding great joy. The bridge—planned by Colonel B., a Frenchman—had been built by the soldiers of the British legion, over boats of unequal height, so that it presented an irregular surface; while the ill-joined planks shook under the horses' hoofs and the men's feet. Only a yard wide, we were forced to cross it in single file, and it seemed as if each wave would carry it away entirely, so piteously did it shake and creak. Two boats quietly floated from under it, and presently the end planks gave way—so that B.'s engineering skill was in constant requisition throughout the day; while the long lank structure itself provoked the mirth of the whole army. As we reached the opposite bank, my mission completed, I spurred on my horse to rejoin the General, who was some miles ahead of us. The enemy, garrisoning Capua with 10,000 men, had retreated on the Garigliano. A general belief prevailed that in the intervening plain the final battle was to be given by the Northern and Southern armies united, that Garibaldi and the King were to meet on the field, and that the former was to present the latter with the crown of the Two Sicilies. Such was the poetic programme of the day; but in general our soldiers, eager to measure their strength with that of the regular army, cared little for the dramatic meeting of the two personages.

We were proceeding slowly along the narrow embankment, crowded with troops who were wild with joy from having at length set foot on the so-long-contested shore, when we were told that General Bixio, thrown from his horse, had broken his leg; and as we reached a point where three roads met, we found him seated on the ground, his head bandaged, his face swollen and bloody, while a surgeon was setting his broken leg. Game to the backbone, he was assisting the doctor with the most perfect sang-froid—his only lament being that the accident would prevent his fighting—and cautioning the bystanders to conceal his state from his wife. It appeared that, Garibaldi having ordered the arrest of a priest suspected as a spy, Bixio, unmindful of his rank, dashed after the fugitive; and turning from the embankment into a narrow paved path, his horse, impetuous as its rider, had slipped, and falling on its flank, Bixio keeping in the saddle, had dashed his head against the wall and broken his leg in the stirrup. This disaster was the priest's salvation : it was the second accident of the day. Later, a Genoese sharpshooter killed his comrade accidentally, and two of the English legion were seriously wounded by the accidental discharge of a gun.

"A day of ill omen even for the unprejudiced," said I to C., who rode by my side. "'If the fowls won't eat they may drink,' was Appio Puloro's reply, causing the abstemious birds to be thrown into the sea; and despite the predictions of the augur he gave battle to the Carthaginians, and was defeated. You laugh, mio caro" (C. was already on the broad grin at the 'analogous fact'), "but both Livy and Macphiarrelli plume

the Roman consul ; and if we don't give heed to the evil prognostications of to-day, and return to our encampment on the other side of the Volturno—if we insist on the fowls drinking since they won't eat—we shall lose the battle with the Sardinian king."

"With the Bourbon, you mean."

"No, no ! With the Sardinian king, who comes to combat us."

"With carnal weapons ?"

"With political weapons first, and with carnal ones if these fail. We are now about to sign our act of abdication, and it is too soon for Italian liberty, and will prove a serious obstacle to the triumph of Italian democracy."

We were skirting one of the chains of mountains, with the river to our left, while to our right stretched the plain, commanded by Capua, designated as the theatre of the final battle. The Dictator ordered me to ascend to the summit of the mountain, to ascertain whether any traces of the enemy were visible in the surrounding valleys. Many such precautions did he take during the day. Cautious as ever, he did not seem inspired with his usual daring. It was not our Garibaldi of Palermo and the Volturno, but Garibaldi the King's lieutenant ; he was executing, not creating—shading a sketch that was not his own.

Accompanied by a Hungarian captain and four of his soldiers, we rode along the mountain summits, from crest to crest, parallel with the march of our army, but could descry neither friend nor foe ; no traces of human habitation gladdened us even in the valleys. It was past noon, and we had not broken our fast ; the long ride, the rarefied air sharpened our appetites. As yet the Hungarians and I, ignorant of each other's language, had not exchanged a syllable—when suddenly, at the sight of a monastery at the bend of a hill, I broke the tedious silence, exclaiming, "Elien, Lajos Kossuth !" and at the sound of their native tongue and the name of Kossuth, my mute and famished companions gratefully echoed, "Elien." I must confess that an evviva to Kossuth did not form part of my programme, but these were the only words I knew of Hungarian. Then, remembering that the Magyar captain, in his quality of gentleman, was sure to know Latin, I pointed to the monastery, and said, in Macaronic phrase : "*Monaci illi censeo dubunt nobis panem, caseum vitumque*"—and he—"Bonum ! *fames nostra est magna*." I consoled myself that in point of Latinity the Magyar and myself were on a par. We found ten monks at dinner ; they welcomed us cordially, and made us take their places ; helped us to smoking boiled beef, chestnuts and wine, and ordered a generous feed of corn for our horses. When the first cravings of hunger were appeased, and the wine had warmed our cheeks and ears, we began to talk at random on theology, monks, and nuns ; the jolly friar did not seem at all scandalized at my heterodox opinions, but joined in the jokes, and laughed at the allusions to their equivocal life.

"I feel sorry for you," I said to the prior, "but your ripaille will soon come to an end."

"Indeed !" exclaimed a young monk, his eyes sparkling with joy ; but

the prior cut him short by sending him to his cell ; then turning uneasily to me, he asked—" Has the Dictator issued any decree concerning us ? No ? Well, then, we have nothing to fear, for what Garibaldi, who abhors priests and friars, has not done, will certainly not be effected by the scion of the pious house of Savoy, who is about to take possession of the realm."

To the evident truth spoken by the prior, there was no reply, and taking leave of each other at the convent gates, we parted good friends.

The rest of the day was spent in assiduous peregrinations with the General to study the ground, reconnoitre the enemy's movements, and guess at his intentions. From the lateral path winding round the hills we pushed our explorations along the military road that leads from Capua to Gaeta, up to the ramparts of the former city.

In the evening we pitched our tent round a straw-rick. Our horses were worn out, and not a drop of water could we find. Up rose the General, saying, " We must go in search ; " and following his example, we each led our horse by the bridle, and staggering through the darkness, over uneven roads, sought vainly for the coveted stream. After going backwards and forwards for some time, I said to Nullo, " I see plainly that without Moses' rod our horses will pass the night athirst."

" Moses is there," he answered, pointing to Garibaldi, " and he will find the rod."

A little farther on, at the foot of a steep ravine, we found a muddy pool, and here the poor beasts slaked their thirst. Returning to the straw-rick, I shook down the best bed I could under the circumstances, and had just lain down, when my wife arrived, thoroughly exhausted with the sixteen miles on foot, which, after recrossing the Volturno with the wounded Bixio, she had made to join us ; so my shakedown was transformed into a nuptial couch. Garibaldi, stretched at full length near us, was questioning the quartermaster-general about the supplies, concerning which he did not seem best pleased.

" And the British legion," he asked, " are they provided ? "

" I sent my best purveyor to Colonel P.," replied A., " but he dismissed him, saying that he preferred retaining his independence."

" Then let them live on their independence."

" P.'s legionaries live by the chase ; they have already killed more than a hundred pigs."

" Wild boars, you mean ? "

" No, Generale ; I mean pigs taken from the peasants, who clamour in their own noisy fashion for payment."

" And paid they must be," were the last words I heard as I fell asleep. But war is not peace, and in less than an hour the General's voice, calling me by name, with the aid of my wife's elbow, made me start to my feet, and by sheer force of habit reply, " I am at your service, General ! "

" Saddle your horse, and go in search of the Milan brigade, which is missing, and station it on our left."

Envyng my sleeping comrades, I mounted, and the intense cold soon

bringing me to my senses, I began to think where the missing brigade could be, and when found, where I was to station it? A staff officer ought certainly to know which was the left of head-quarters, but I did not; nor do I think any of my fellow-officers were wiser, since the General's habit of keeping his own counsel reduced his staff to mere orderlies. Substituting hypothesis for knowledge, and remembering that the military road from Capua to Gaeta had been the objective point of our manœuvres during the day, it seemed rational to suppose that we were encamped parallel to it and to the mountain line, and presuming our head-quarters to be in the centre, the left must of necessity be in the direction of the town of Pignattoni, towards the Volturno. Having thus constructed the order of battle in my head, as best I could, I galloped on, now across fields, now along the road, trusting more to my horse's discernment than to my own, so pitch-dark was the night. Not that I regretted the obscurity, for I thought it just as likely that I should fall in with a Bourbon patrol as with our own men. And when at length the clattering of horses' hoofs became audible, I stood still, and awaited the new comers with revolver at full cock, greeting them as they approached with a *Chi va là?* They gave the pass-word, and I rode up to them. It was the Milan brigade, and guiding them to the appointed spot, I went to inform the General. Fortunately, I had stumbled on the veritable left, and, perhaps by way of recompence, he gave me a piece of roast lamb; but sleep was more imperious than hunger, so putting the lamb in my pocket, I sank down at once on my bed.

Alas! my slumbers were again disturbed by loud voices and the rustling of straw close to my head.

"That's one of my delectable countrymen," said my wife; "a certain L. J. come here to collect materials for a lecture. He has been clamouring for a ladder; what he can want it for he only knows."

In the morning our curiosity was satisfied. John Bull, unable to find ease on a shakedown good enough for the Dictator and his Staff, had climbed up to the flat top of the straw-rick, and pulled the ladder up after him lest any one else should be tempted to share his couch.

At dawn I was ordered to move the Genoese sharpshooters to the van, and see them in march along the road to Teano. Arrived at a spot where a branch road leads off to the right, I let the troops proceed, and halting with Nullo in an old tumble-down house, we fraternally shared the roast lamb which had greased my pockets. Soon a company of Piedmontese lancers came up, and then we knew that the King was approaching. Nullo had visited him during the night, the bearer of a despatch from the General; his Majesty, descending from his bed, received him in dressing-gown, slippers, and nightcap.

Crossing the fields, where the foundations of a railroad had been dug, we halted at a hut where three roads met, to await Garibaldi. Coming from Venafro, the Northern army defiled towards Teano, and the band of each regiment, detaching itself from the front, took up a flank position, to enliven their passage with the usual martial music, and then file in at the

tear. The point of intersection of the two roads was sufficiently ample; a rustic cottage and a few poplars ornamented it. Ploughed fields, trees at rare intervals, and faded autumn vines, studded the tedious plains. Garibaldi did not tarry long, and dismounting, he stood gazing with evident satisfaction on the troops. The Army General Della Rocca advanced courteously. A few officers greeted him with beaming faces; but the greater part passed on with the prescribed salute, unconscious of, or indifferent to the presence of the Liberator of the Two Sicilies. Indeed an impartial observer of the respective physiognomies would have taken them for the liberators and him for the liberated. Presently the drums beat, and the musicians struck up the royal march.

"It is the King," said General Della Rocca. "The King! the King!" burst from every lip. A group of carabineers on horse, forming the body-guard, armed with swords, handcuffs, and thumb-screws, announced the presence of the Sardinian monarch. The King, in general's uniform, rode a piebald Arab, and behind him came a long train of generals, chamberlains, and orderlies: Fanti the Minister of War, and Farini viceroy of Naples *in pectore*: who was wrapped in and embarrassed by a large military tunic. All were alike adverse to Garibaldi—to this plebeian donor of a realm. The Dictator's appearance was singular that morning. Under his little pork-pie hat he had tied his foulard, to protect his ears from the morning dew—so that when he lifted his hat to the King the handkerchief remained knotted under his chin. The King held out his hand, saying,—"Ah! Addio, caro Garibaldi; come state?"

"Bene, Maestà; e Lei?"

"Benino!"

Raising his voice, and turning to the crowd, the Dictator cried, "Hail to the King of Italy!" and all responded, "Viva il Rè!"

Moving on one side to allow the troops to pass, the King and the Dictator chatted together for a few minutes. I happened to be close to them, and I confess that I was curious to hear for the first time in my life a king's discourse—to judge for myself whether lofty sentiments would correspond with the grandeur of the situation. Campanian soil—Capua at hand—shades of Hannibal and Roman consuls—the meeting of the armies of Castelfidardo and Maddaloni—the eve of battle—presence of the conquering prince and of the man of the people, donor of a realm—contact of the red shirt and royal purple—transformation of a petty king into the King of Italy—all combined to render the situation truly epic.

The King talked of the fine weather and of the bad roads, interrupting the conversation to administer gruff reproofs and manual checks to his fiery and restless steed; then they rode on, Garibaldi at the King's left, and a few paces behind, the Sardinian and Garibaldian staff pell-mell; but soon each returned to his own centre—in one line the modest red shirts, in the other splendid uniforms shining with gold, silver, crosses, medals, and ~~and~~ carbines. But in the midst of a pervading sensation of the vanity of human grandeur, arose the connecting thought:

of the sumptuous breakfast which the royal cooks had gone to prepare at Teano.

Meanwhile the clash of arms, the shining plumes and helmets, had attracted all the peasants of the environs, who hailed Garibaldi with their usual enthusiasm. He was at his wits' end to direct their attention from himself to the King, and keeping his horse a few paces behind, he cried, with an imperious gesture, "This is Vittorio Emmanuele, the King, your King, the King of Italy. *Viva il Rè!*" The peasants stared and listened: then, not understanding the tenor of his speech, again shouted, "*Viva Galibardo!*" The poor General was on the rack, and knowing how dear to princes is applause, and how much his popularity irritated the King, would have given a second kingdom to wring from the lips of those unsophisticated boors an *evviva* to the King of Italy, who ended the question by spurring his horse into a gallop. We of course galloped after him; and even Farini, grasping his saddle, careless of reins or stirrups, galloped too, his trowsers working gradually upwards until his knees were left bare. Fortunately for him, the King reined in his horse as soon as the boors were passed, and the future viceroy had time to adjust his trowsers, smooth down his tunic, set his hat straight, and wipe the perspiration from his brow.

Arrived at the bridge which crosses the little stream near Teano, I saw Garibaldi lift his hat to the King, and take the road leading across country, while his Majesty crossed the bridge. Thus they parted at right angles, the royalists following the King, we Garibaldi. He dismounted at a little village, and led his horse into an outhouse on the road. Miss., Nullo, Z., and myself, posted our horses on an adjacent mound, and looked at each other in blank amazement. Entering the outhouse, I found the General standing by a barrel, on which his orderly had laid the breakfast, i.e. a piece of bread and cheese and a glass of water, which as soon as he had drunk, he spat out, saying, "There must be a dead animal at the bottom of the well." Slowly and silently we retraced our steps to Calvi, near the Volturno. Garibaldi's countenance was full of melancholy sweetness; never did I feel drawn to him with such tenderness.

Halting at Calvi, he arranged his 10,000 men with perspicacious study: one wing towards Cascione—the other towards Sparanisi; the front converging to the road which leads through St. Agata to the bridge of Garigliano: and spent the remainder of the day in minute personal explorations.

In the evening he fixed his head-quarters in a little church near the town of Calvi—we surrounding him, sitting or lying on the straw. Presently a deputation of Sicilians arrived, and enlivened the mute scene with their sarddiches and metaphors. The orations of these noisy islanders sent me to sleep, and when they took their departure the silence woke me; and just at that moment the general was informed that a squadron of the enemy's cavalry was advancing full gallop towards the church.

"To horse, S.," he cried, "and drive them back."

Proud of the honour conferred, hoping to renew the deeds of Oratio

Coolite, I ascended in a trice; but several of my comrades who heard the order, and who probably belonged to that historical school who consider the Coolite and Curtius fictions belonging to the poetic age of Rome, thought it better to accompany me. First two, then three, till I found myself at the head of that little band of daring ones whom Garibaldi calls "my brave companions," while at our heels followed officers and soldiers of the line, so that, instead of the one chosen, we set out fifty strong. Leaving the sentinels of our outposts behind us, we rode on, hoping for some daring enterprise as the sound of horses' hoofs approached. The infantry spread over the fields, while we, keeping to the road, advanced, prepared to charge with swords and revolvers. On we dash, crying—"Halt! halt! lay down your arms!" and the waggoners, terrified but obedient, laid down their whips and stopped a cart laden with bricks and drawn by four horses! We gaze and gaze, but we can make nothing of them but bricks. Gaily we started, glum we returned.

On the morrow, a little after dawn, we heard the cannon on the Garigliano. My wife came in to ask for orders for the ambulance. "Signora," said Garibaldi, in accents somewhat stern and emphatic, "my wounded are on the other side of the Volturno." We stood mute and expectant, wondering to whom this reply alluded; and as his face gradually put on a milder and more resigned expression of sorrow, he added, sadly, calling her name, "J., ci hanno messo alla coda"—("They have sent us to the ~~rest~~"), when I understood what it was that had disturbed the angelic serenity of the morning, which I had felt could not have resulted from the prince's interurbanity.

Later, the King rode past our lines up to the Volturno. Colonel Dazza, the head of Bixio's staff, did the honours of the camp. Indeed the Garibaldian generals and many Garibaldian officers vied with each other in paying homage to the rising sun, affording a by no means edifying chapter to a student of ethics.

At two A.M. on the 7th November, three hired carriages drew up before the gate of the Hotel della Bretagna in Naples. At a quarter past two the doors of the tremont ~~opened~~, and Garibaldi, Menotti, and Basso drove off; Trecohi, Missoi, Nullo, Cicalio, Zasio and myself, followed in the other two. At the ferry of Saline Lattaria we entered a boat, and soon deserted from the port the vaporous ~~shores~~ of the Sirene, oblivious and asleep in the arms of her new lover. Yet only two months had elapsed since the night of the 7th September—that night of the wild welcome to the Liberator!

Now, crowned with glory, he withdrew from the cold breath of oblivion, escorted by a few faithful friends, who loved him best when fortune loved him least. On the deck of the Washington he bid adieu to Naples and to us, adding, "We shall meet again on the path to Rome!"



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BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER III.
THE CLAIMS OF SOCIETY.



MORE than an hour after Allan had set forth on his exploring expedition through his own grounds, Midwinter rose, and enjoyed, in his turn, a full view by daylight of the magnificence of the new house.

Refreshed by his long night's rest, he descended the great staircase as cheerfully as Allan himself. One after another, he, too, looked into the spacious rooms on the ground-floor in breathless astonishment at the beauty and the luxury which surrounded him. "The house where I lived in service when I was a boy was a fine one," he thought, gaily; "but it was nothing to this! I wonder if Allan is as surprised and delighted as I am?" The beauty of the summer morning drew

PENNY'S EDITION.—In the portion of "Armadale" published in last month's number, at page 262, for—"here I am, at my very best, a good sixteen years older than he is," read:—"here I am, at my very best, a good six years older than he is."

him out through the open hall-door, as it had drawn his friend out before him. He ran briskly down the steps, humming the burden of one of the old vagabond tunes which he had danced to long since, in the old vagabond time. Even the memories of his wretched childhood took their colour, on that happy morning, from the bright medium through which he looked back at them. "If I was not out of practice," he thought to himself, as he leant on the fence and looked over at the park, "I could try some of my old tumbling tricks on that delicious grass." He turned; noticed two of the servants talking together near the shrubbery, and asked for news of the master of the house. The men pointed with a smile in the direction of the gardens; Mr. Armadale had gone that way more than an hour since, and had met (as had been reported) with Miss Milroy in the grounds. Midwinter followed the path through the shrubbery, but, on reaching the flower-garden, stopped, considered a little, and retraced his steps. "If Allan has met with the young lady," he said to himself, "Allan doesn't want me." He laughed as he drew that inevitable inference, and turned considerably to explore the beauties of Thorpe-Ambrose on the other side of the house.

Passing the angle of the front wall of the building, he descended some steps, advanced along a paved walk, turned another angle, and found himself in a strip of garden-ground at the back of the house. Behind him was a row of small rooms situated on the level of the servants' offices. In front of him, on the farther side of the little garden, rose a wall, screened by a laurel hedge, and having a door at one end of it, leading past the stables to a gate that opened on the high road. Perceiving that he had only discovered, thus far, the shorter way to the house, used by the servants and tradespeople, Midwinter turned back again, and looked in at the window of one of the rooms on the basement story as he passed it. Were these the servants' offices? No; the offices were apparently in some other part of the ground-floor; the window he had looked in at was the window of a lumber-room. The next two rooms in the row were both empty. The fourth window, when he approached it, presented a little variety. It served also as a door; and it stood open to the garden at that moment.

Attracted by the book-shelves which he noticed on one of the walls, Midwinter stepped into the room. The books, few in number, did not detain him long; a glance at their backs was enough, without taking them down. The Waverley Novels, Tales by Miss Edgeworth, and by Miss Edgeworth's many followers, the Poems of Mrs. Hemans, with a few odd volumes of the illustrated gift-books of the period, composed the bulk of the little library. Midwinter turned to leave the room, when an object on one side of the window, which he had not previously noticed, caught his attention and stopped him. It was a statuette standing on a bracket—a reduced copy of the famous Niobe of the Florence Museum. He glanced from the statuette to the window, with a sudden doubt which set his heart throbbing fast. It was a French window; and the statuette was on his left hand as he stood before it. He looked out with a suspicion which

he had not felt yet. The view before him was the view of a lawn and garden. For a moment his mind struggled blindly to escape the conclusion which had seized it—and struggled in vain. Here, close round him and close before him; here, forcing him mercilessly back from the happy present to the horrible past, was the room that Allan had seen in the Second Vision of the Dream.

He waited, thinking and looking round him while he thought. There was wonderfully little disturbance in his face and manner; he looked steadily from one to the other of the few objects in the room, as if the discovery of it had saddened rather than surprised him. Matting of some foreign sort covered the floor. Two cane chairs and a plain table comprised the whole of the furniture. The walls were plainly papered, and bare—broken to the eye in one place by a door leading into the interior of the house; in another, by a small stove; in a third, by the book-shelves which Midwinter had already noticed. He returned to the books; and, this time, he took some of them down from the shelves.

The first that he opened contained lines in a woman's handwriting, traced in ink that had faded with time. He read the inscription—"Jane Armadale, from her beloved father. Thorpe-Ambrose, October, 1828." In the second, third, and fourth volumes that he opened, the same inscription reappeared. His previous knowledge of dates and persons helped him to draw the true inference from what he saw. The books must have belonged to Allan's mother; and she must have inscribed them with her name, in the interval of time between her return to Thorpe-Ambrose from Madeira, and the birth of her son. Midwinter passed on to a volume on another shelf—one of a series containing the writings of Mrs. Hemans. In this case, the blank leaf at the beginning of the book was filled on both sides with a copy of verses, the writing being still in Mrs. Armadale's hand. The verses were headed, "Farewell to Thorpe-Ambrose," and were dated "March, 1829"—two months only after Allan had been born.

Entirely without merit in itself, the only interest of the little poem was in the domestic story that it told. The very room in which Midwinter then stood was described—with the view on the garden, the window made to open on it, the book-shelves, the Niobe, and other more perishable ornaments which Time had destroyed. Here, at variance with her brothers, shrinking from her friends, the widow of the murdered man had, on her own acknowledgment, secluded herself, without other comfort than the love and forgiveness of her father, until her child was born. The father's mercy and the father's recent death filled many verses—happily too vague in their commonplace expression of penitence and despair, to give any hint of the marriage-story in Madeira to any reader who looked at them ignorant of the truth. A passing reference to the writer's estrangement from her surviving relatives, and to her approaching departure from Thorpe-Ambrose, followed. Last came the assertion of the mother's resolution to separate herself from all her old associations; to leave behind her every possession, even to the most trifling thing she

had, that could remind her of the miserable past; and to date her new life in the future from the birthday of the child who had been spared to console her—who was now the one earthly object that could still speak to her of love and hope. So the old story of passionate feeling that finds comfort in phrases rather than not find comfort at all, was told once again. So the poem in the faded ink faded away to its end.

Midwinter put the book back with a heavy sigh, and opened no other volume on the shelves. "Here in the country-house, or there on board the Wreck," he said bitterly, "the traces of my father's crime follow me, go where I may." He advanced towards the window—stopped and looked back into the lonely neglected little room. "Is *this* chance?" he asked himself. "The place where his mother suffered is the place he sees in the Dream; and the first morning in the new house is the morning that reveals it, not to *him*, but to *me*. Oh, Allan! Allan! how will it end?"

The thought had barely passed through his mind before he heard Allan's voice, from the paved walk at the side of the house, calling to him by his name. He hastily stepped out into the garden. At the same moment Allan came running round the corner, full of voluble apologies for having forgotten, in the society of his new neighbours, what was due to the laws of hospitality and the claims of his friend.

"I really haven't missed you," said Midwinter; "and I am very, very glad to hear that the new neighbours have produced such a pleasant impression on you already."

He tried, as he spoke, to lead the way back by the outside of the house; but Allan's flighty attention had been caught by the open window and the lonely little room. He stepped in immediately. Midwinter followed, and watched him in breathless anxiety, as he looked round. Not the slightest recollection of the Dream troubled Allan's easy mind. Not the slightest reference to it fell from the silent lips of his friend.

"Exactly the sort of place I should have expected you to hit on!" exclaimed Allan gaily. "Small and snug and unpretending. I know you, Master Midwinter! You'll be slipping off here, when the county families come visiting—and I rather think, on those dreadful occasions you won't find me far behind you. What's the matter? You look ill and out of spirits. Hungry? Of course you are! unpardonable of me to have kept you waiting—this door leads somewhere, I suppose; let's try a short cut into the house. Don't be afraid of my not keeping you company at breakfast. I didn't eat much at the cottage—I feasted my eyes on Miss Milroy, as the poets say. Oh, the darling! the darling! she turns you topsy-turvy the moment you look at her. As for her father; wait till you see his wonderful clock! It's twice the size of the famous clock at Strasburg, and the most tremendous striker ever heard yet in the memory of man!"

Singing the praises of his new friends in this strain, at the top of his voice, Allan hurried Midwinter along the stone passages on the basement floor which led, as he had rightly guessed, to a staircase communicating

with the hall. They passed the servants' offices on the way. At the sight of the cook and the roaring fire, disclosed through the open kitchen door, Allan's mind went off at a tangent, and Allan's dignity scattered itself to the four winds of heaven, as usual.

"Aha, Mrs. Gripper; there you are with your pots and pans, and your burning fiery furnace ! One had need be Shadrach, Meshech, and the other fellow, to stand over that. Breakfast as soon as ever you like. Eggs, sausages, bacon, kidneys, marmalade, watercresses, coffee, and so forth. My friend and I belong to the select few whom it's a perfect privilege to cook for. Voluptuaries, Mrs. Gripper, voluptuaries, both of us. You'll see," continued Allan, as they went on towards the stairs, "I shall make that worthy creature young again ; I'm better than a doctor for Mrs. Gripper. When she laughs she shakes her fat sides ; and when she shakes her fat sides she exerts her muscular system ; and when she exerts her muscular system — Ha ! here's Susan again. Don't squeeze yourself flat against the banisters, my dear ; if you don't mind hustling *me* on the stairs, I rather like hustling *you*. She looks like a full-blown rose when she blushes, doesn't she ? Stop, Susan ! I've some orders to give. Be very particular with Mr. Midwinter's room : shake up his bed like mad, and dust his furniture till those nice round arms of yours ache again. Nonsense, my dear fellow ! I'm not too familiar with them ; I'm only keeping them up to their work. Now then, Richard ! where do we breakfast ? Oh, here. Between ourselves, Midwinter, these splendid rooms of mine are a size too large for me ; I don't feel as if I should ever be on intimate terms with my own furniture. My views in life are of the snug and slovenly sort—a kitchen chair, you know, and a low ceiling. Man wants but little here below, and wants that little long. That's not exactly the right quotation ; but it expresses my meaning, and we'll let alone correcting it till the next opportunity."

"I beg your pardon," interposed Midwinter, "here is something waiting for you which you have not noticed yet."

As he spoke, he pointed a little impatiently to a letter lying on the breakfast-table. He could conceal the ominous discovery which he had made that morning, from Allan's knowledge ; but he could not conquer the latent distrust of circumstances which was now roused again in his superstitious nature—the instinctive suspicion of everything that happened, no matter how common or how trifling the event, on the first memorable day when the new life began in the new house.

Allan ran his eye over the letter, and tossed it across the table to his friend. "I can't make head or tail of it," he said ; "can you ?"

Midwinter read the letter slowly, aloud. "Sir,—I trust you will pardon the liberty I take in sending these few lines to wait your arrival at Thorpe-Ambrose. In the event of circumstances not disposing you to place your law-business in the hands of Mr. Darch—" He suddenly stopped at that point, and considered a little.

"Darch is our friend the lawyer," said Allan, supposing Midwinter

had forgotten the name. "Don't you remember our spinning the half-crown on the cabin table, when I got the two offers for the cottage? Heads, the major; tails, the lawyer. This is the lawyer."

Without making any reply, Midwinter resumed reading the letter. "In the event of circumstances not disposing you to place your law-business in the hands of Mr. Darch, I beg to say that I shall be happy to take charge of your interests, if you feel willing to honour me with your confidence. Enclosing a reference (should you desire it) to my agents in London, and again apologizing for this intrusion, I beg to remain, Sir, respectfully yours, A. PEDGIFT, SENR."

"Circumstances?" repeated Midwinter, as he laid the letter down. "What circumstances can possibly indispose you to give your law-business to Mr. Darch?"

"Nothing can indispose me," said Allan. "Besides being the family lawyer here, Darch was the first to write me word at Paris of my coming in for my fortune; and, if I have got any business to give, of course he ought to have it."

Midwinter still looked distrustfully at the open letter on the table. "I am sadly afraid, Allan, there is something wrong already," he said. "This man would never have ventured on the application he has made to you, unless he had some good reason for believing it would succeed. If you wish to put yourself right at starting, you will send to Mr. Darch this morning, to tell him you are here, and you will take no notice for the present of Mr. Pedgiff's letter."

Before more could be said on either side, the footman made his appearance with the breakfast tray. He was followed, after an interval, by the butler—a man of the essentially confidential kind, with a modulated voice, a courtly manner, and a bulbous nose. Anybody but Allan would have seen in his face that he had come into the room having a special communication to make to his master. Allan, who saw nothing under the surface, and whose head was running on the lawyer's letter, stopped him bluntly with the point-blank question:—"Who's Mr. Pedgiff?"

The butler's sources of local knowledge opened confidentially on the instant. Mr. Pedgiff was the second of the two lawyers in the town. Not so long-established, not so wealthy, not so universally looked-up-to as old Mr. Darch. Not doing the business of the highest people in the county, and not mixing freely with the best society, like old Mr. Darch. A very sufficient man, in his way, nevertheless. Known as a perfectly competent and respectable practitioner all round the neighbourhood. In short, professionally next best to Mr. Darch; and personally superior to him (if the expression might be permitted) in this respect—that Darch was a Crusty One, and Pedgiff wasn't.

Having imparted this information, the butler, taking a wise advantage of his position, glided without a moment's stoppage, from Mr. Pedgiff's character to the business that had brought him into the breakfast-room. The Midsummer Audit was near at hand; and the tenants were accus-

tomed to have a week's notice of the rent-day dinner. With this necessity pressing, and with no orders given as yet, and no steward in office at Thorpe-Ambrose, it appeared desirable that some confidential person should bring the matter forward. The butler was that confidential person; and he now ventured accordingly to trouble his master on the subject.

At this point, Allan opened his lips to interrupt, and was himself interrupted before he could utter a word.

"Wait!" interposed Midwinter, seeing in Allan's face that he was in danger of being publicly announced in the capacity of steward. "Wait!" he repeated eagerly, "till I can speak to you first."

The butler's courtly manner remained alike unruffled by Midwinter's sudden interference and by his own dismissal from the scene. Nothing but the mounting colour in his bulbous nose betrayed the sense of injury that animated him as he withdrew. Mr. Armadale's chance of regaling his friend and himself that day with the best wine in the cellar, trembled in the balance, as the butler took his way back to the basement story.

"This is beyond a joke, Allan," said Midwinter, when they were alone. "Somebody must meet your tenants on the rent-day who is really fit to take the steward's place. With the best will in the world to learn, it is impossible for *me* to master the business at a week's notice. Don't, pray don't let your anxiety for my welfare put you in a false position with other people! I should never forgive myself if I was the unlucky cause——"

"Gently, gently!" cried Allan, amazed at his friend's extraordinary earnestness. "If I write to London by to-night's post for the man who came down here before, will that satisfy you?"

Midwinter shook his head. "Our time is short," he said; "and the man may not be at liberty. Why not try in the neighbourhood first? You were going to write to Mr. Darch. Send at once, and see if he can't help us between this and post-time."

Allan withdrew to a side-table on which writing materials were placed. "You shall breakfast in peace, you old fidget," he replied—and addressed himself forthwith to Mr. Darch, with his usual Spartan brevity of epistolary expression. "Dear Sir,—Here I am, bag and baggage. Will you kindly oblige me by being my lawyer? I ask this, because I want to consult you at once. Please look in in the course of the day, and stop to dinner if you possibly can. Yours truly, ALLAN ARMADALE." Having read this composition aloud with unconcealed admiration of his own rapidity of literary execution, Allan addressed the letter to Mr. Darch, and rang the bell. "Here, Richard, take this at once, and wait for an answer. And, I say, if there's any news stirring in the town, pick it up and bring it back with you. See how I manage my servants!" continued Allan, joining his friend at the breakfast-table. "See how I adapt myself to my new duties! I haven't been down here one clear day yet, and I'm taking an interest in the neighbourhood already."

Breakfast over, the two friends went out to idle away the morning under the shade of a tree in the park. Noon came, and Richard never appeared. One o'clock struck, and still there were no signs of an answer from Mr. Darch. Midwinter's patience was not proof against the delay. He left Allan dozing on the grass, and went to the house to make inquiries. The town was described as little more than two miles distant; but the day of the week happened to be market-day, and Richard was being detained no doubt by some of the many acquaintances whom he would be sure to meet with on that occasion.

Half an hour later, the truant messenger returned, and was sent out to report himself to his master under the tree in the park.

"Any answer from Mr. Darch?" asked Midwinter, seeing that Allan was too lazy to put the question for himself.

"Mr. Darch was engaged, sir. I was desired to say that he would send an answer."

"Any news in the town?" inquired Allan, drowsily, without troubling himself to open his eyes.

"No, sir; nothing in particular."

Observing the man suspiciously as he made that reply, Midwinter detected in his face that he was not speaking the truth. He was plainly embarrassed, and plainly relieved when his master's silence allowed him to withdraw. After a little consideration, Midwinter followed, and overtook the retreating servant on the drive before the house.

"Richard," he said quietly, "if I was to guess that there *is* some news in the town, and that you don't like telling it to your master, should I be guessing the truth?"

The man started and changed colour. "I don't know how you have found it out, sir," he said; "but I can't deny you have guessed right."

"If you will let me hear what the news is, I will take the responsibility on myself of telling Mr. Armadale."

After some little hesitation, and some distrustful consideration on his side, of Midwinter's face, Richard at last prevailed on himself to repeat what he had heard that day in the town.

The news of Allan's sudden appearance at Thorpe-Ambrose had preceded the servant's arrival at his destination by some hours. Wherever he went, he found his master the subject of public discussion. The opinion of Allan's conduct among the leading townspeople, the resident gentry of the neighbourhood, and the principal tenants on the estate, was unanimously unfavourable. Only the day before, the committee for managing the public reception of the new squire had sketched the progress of the procession; had settled the serious question of the triumphal arches; and had appointed a competent person to solicit subscriptions for the flags, the flowers, the feasting, the fireworks, and the band. In less than a week more, the money could have been collected, and the rector would have written to Mr. Armadale to fix the day. And now, by Allan's own act, the public welcome waiting to honour him, had been cast back con-

temptuously in the public teeth! Everybody took for granted (what was unfortunately true) that he had received private information of the contemplated proceedings. Everybody declared that he had purposely stolen into his own house like a thief in the night (so the phrase ran), to escape accepting the offered civilities of his neighbours. In brief, the sensitive self-importance of the little town was wounded to the quick; and of Allan's once enviable position in the estimation of the neighbourhood not a vestige remained.

For a moment, Midwinter faced the messenger of evil tidings in silent distress. That moment past, the sense of Allan's critical position roused him, now the evil was known, to seek the remedy.

"Has the little you have seen of your master, Richard, inclined you to like him?" he asked.

This time, the man answered without hesitation, "A pleasanter and kinder gentleman than Mr. Armadale no one could wish to serve."

"If you think that," pursued Midwinter, "you won't object to give me some information which will help your master to set himself right with his neighbours. Come into the house."

He led the way into the library, and, after asking the necessary questions, took down in writing a list of the names and addresses of the most influential persons living in the town and its neighbourhood. This done, he rang the bell for the head footman, having previously sent Richard with a message to the stables, directing an open carriage to be ready in an hour's time.

"When the late Mr. Blanchard went out to make calls in the neighbourhood, it was your place to go with him, was it not?" he asked, when the upper servant appeared. "Very well. Be ready in an hour's time, if you please, to go out with Mr. Armadale." Having given that order, he left the house again on his way back to Allan, with the visiting list in his hand. He smiled a little sadly as he descended the steps. "Who would have imagined," he thought, "that my footboy's experience of the ways of gentlefolks, would be worth looking back at one day for Allan's sake?"

The object of the popular odium lay innocently slumbering on the grass, with his garden hat over his nose, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his trousers wrinkled half way up his outstretched legs. Midwinter roused him without hesitation, and remorselessly repeated the servant's news.

Allan accepted the disclosure thus forced on him without the slightest disturbance of temper. "Oh, hang 'em!" was all he said. "Let's have another cigar." Midwinter took the cigar out of his hand, and, insisting on his treating the matter seriously, told him in plain words that he must set himself right with his offended neighbours by calling on them personally to make his apologies. Allan sat up on the grass in astonishment; his eyes opened wide in incredulous dismay. Did Midwinter positively meditate forcing him into a "chimney-pot hat," a nicely brushed frock-coat, and a clean pair of gloves? Was it actually in contemplation to

shut him up in a carriage, with his footman on the box and his card-case in his hand, and send him round from house to house, to tell a pack of fools that he begged their pardon for not letting them make a public show of him? If anything so outrageously absurd as this was really to be done, it could not be done that day, at any rate. He had promised to go back to the charming Milroy at the cottage and to take Midwinter with him. What earthly need had he of the good opinion of the resident gentry? The only friends he wanted were the friends he had got already. Let the whole neighbourhood turn its back on him if it liked—back or face the Squire of Thorpe-Ambrose didn't care two straws about it.

After allowing him to run on in this way until his whole stock of objections was exhausted, Midwinter wisely tried his personal influence next. He took Allan affectionately by the hand. "I am going to ask a great favour," he said. "If you won't call on these people for your own sake, will you call on them to please me?"

Allan delivered himself of a groan of despair, stared in mute surprise at the anxious face of his friend, and good-humouredly gave way. As Midwinter took his arm, and led him back to the house, he looked round with rueful eyes at the cattle hard by, placidly whisking their tails in the pleasant shade. "Don't mention it in the neighbourhood," he said; "I should like to change places with one of my own cows."

Midwinter left him to dress, engaging to return when the carriage was at the door. Allan's toilette did not promise to be a speedy one. He began it by reading his own visiting cards; and he advanced it a second stage by looking into his wardrobe, and devoting the resident gentry to the infernal regions. Before he could discover any third means of delaying his own proceedings, the necessary pretext was unexpectedly supplied by Richard's appearance with a note in his hand. The messenger had just called with Mr. Darch's answer. Allan briskly shut up the wardrobe, and gave his whole attention to the lawyer's letter. The lawyer's letter rewarded him by the following lines:—

"Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of to-day's date, honouring me with two proposals, namely, ONE inviting me to act as your legal adviser, and ONE inviting me to pay you a visit at your house. In reference to the first proposal, I beg permission to decline it with thanks. With regard to the second proposal, I have to inform you that circumstances have come to my knowledge relating to the letting of the cottage at Thorpe-Ambrose, which render it impossible for me (in justice to myself) to accept your invitation. I have ascertained, sir, that my offer reached you at the same time as Major Milroy's; and that, with both proposals thus before you, you gave the preference to a total stranger, who addressed you through a house-agent, over a man who had faithfully served your relatives for two generations, and who had been the first person to inform you of the most important event in your life. After this specimen of your estimate of what is due to the claims of common courtesy and common justice, I cannot flatter myself that I possess any

of the qualities which would fit me to take my place on the list of your friends.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant, JAMES DARCH."

"Stop the messenger!" cried Allan, leaping to his feet, his ruddy face afire with indignation. "Give me pen, ink and paper! By the Lord Harry, they're a nice set of people in these parts; the whole neighbourhood is in a conspiracy to bully me!" He snatched up the pen in a fine frenzy of epistolary inspiration. "Sir,—I despise you and your letter.—" At that point the pen made a blot, and the writer was seized with a momentary hesitation. "Too strong," he thought; "I'll give it to the lawyer in his own cool and cutting style." He began again on a clean sheet of paper. "Sir,—You remind me of an Irish bull. I mean that story in Joe Miller, where Pat remarked, in the hearing of a wag hard by, that 'the reciprocity was all on one side.' Your reciprocity is all on one side. You take the privilege of refusing to be my lawyer, and then you complain of my taking the privilege of refusing to be your landlord." He paused fondly over those last words. "Neat!" he thought. "Argument and hard hitting both in one. I wonder where my knack of writing comes from?" He went on, and finished the letter in two more sentences. "As for your casting my invitation back in my teeth, I beg to inform you my teeth are none the worse for it. I am equally glad to have nothing to say to you, either in the capacity of a friend or a tenant.—ALLAN ARMADALE." He nodded exultingly at his own composition, as he addressed it and sent it down to the messenger. "Darch's hide must be a thick one," he said, "if he doesn't feel *that!*"

The sound of wheels outside suddenly recalled him to the business of the day. There was the carriage waiting to take him on his round of visits; and there was Midwinter at his post, pacing to and fro on the drive. "Read that," cried Allan, throwing out the lawyer's letter; "I've written him back a smasher."

He bustled away to the wardrobe to get his coat. There was a wonderful change in him; he felt little or no reluctance to pay the visits now. The pleasurable excitement of answering Mr. Darch had put him in a fine aggressive frame of mind for asserting himself in the neighbourhood. "Whatever else they may say of me, they shan't say I was afraid to face them." Heated red-hot with that idea, he seized his hat and gloves, and, hurrying out of the room, met Midwinter in the corridor with the lawyer's letter in his hand.

"Keep up your spirits!" cried Allan, seeing the anxiety in his friend's face, and misinterpreting the motive of it immediately. "If Darch can't be counted on to send us a helping hand into the steward's office, Pedgitt can."

"My dear Allan, I was not thinking of that; I was thinking of Mr. Darch's letter. I don't defend this sour-tempered man—but I am afraid we must admit he has some cause for complaint. Pray don't give him another chance of putting you in the wrong. Where is your answer to his letter?"

"Gone!" replied Allan; "I always strike while the iron's hot—a word and a blow, and the blow first, that's my way. Don't, there's a dear good fellow, don't fidget about the steward's books and the rent-day. Here! here's a bunch of keys they gave me last night: one of them opens the room where the steward's books are; go in and read them till I come back. I give you my sacred word of honour I'll settle it all with Pedgiff before you see me again."

"One moment," interposed Midwinter, stopping him resolutely on his way out to the carriage. "I say nothing against Mr. Pedgiff's fitness to possess your confidence, for I know nothing to justify me in distrusting him. But he has not introduced himself to your notice in a very delicate way; and he has not acknowledged (what is quite clear to my mind) that he knew of Mr. Darch's unfriendly feeling towards you when he wrote. Wait a little before you go to this stranger; wait till we can talk it over together to-night."

"Wait!" replied Allan. "Haven't I told you that I always strike while the iron's hot? Trust my eye for character, old boy; I'll look Pedgiff through and through, and act accordingly. Don't keep me any longer, for heaven's sake. I'm in a fine humour for tackling the resident gentry; and if I don't go at once, I'm afraid it may wear off."

With that excellent reason for being in a hurry, Allan boisterously broke away. Before it was possible to stop him again, he had jumped into the carriage and had left the house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MARCH OF EVENTS.

MIDWINTER'S face darkened when the last trace of the carriage had disappeared from view. "I have done my best," he said, as he turned back gloomily into the house. "If Mr. Brock himself were here, Mr. Brock could do no more!"

He looked at the bunch of keys which Allan had thrust into his hand, and a sudden longing to put himself to the test over the steward's books took possession of his sensitive self-tormenting nature. Inquiring his way to the room in which the various moveables of the steward's office had been provisionally placed, after the letting of the cottage, he sat down at the desk, and tried how his own unaided capacity would guide him through the business records of the Thorpe-Ambrose estate. The result exposed his own ignorance unanswerably before his own eyes. The Ledgers bewildered him; the Leases, the Plots, and even the Correspondence itself, might have been written, for all he could understand of them, in an unknown tongue. His memory reverted bitterly as he left the room again to his two years' solitary self-instruction in the Shrewsbury bookseller's shop. "If I could only have worked at a business!" he thought. "If

I could only have known that the company of Poets and Philosophers was company too high for a vagabond like me!"

He sat down alone in the great hall ; the silence of it fell heavier and heavier on his sinking spirits ; the beauty of it exasperated him, like an insult from a purse-proud man. "Curse the place!" he said, snatching up his hat and stick. "I like the bleakest hill-side I ever slept on, better than I like this house!"

He impatiently descended the doorsteps, and stopped on the drive, considering by which direction he should leave the park for the country beyond. If he followed the road taken by the carriage, he might risk unsettling Allan by accidentally meeting him in the town. If he went out by the back gate, he knew his own nature well enough to doubt his ability to pass the room of the dream without entering it again. But one other way remained—the way which he had taken, and then abandoned again, in the morning. There was no fear of disturbing Allan and the major's daughter now. Without further hesitation, Midwinter set forth through the gardens to explore the open country on that side of the estate.

Thrown off its balance by the events of the day, his mind was full of that sourly-savage resistance to the inevitable self-assertion of wealth, so amiably deplored by the prosperous and the rich ; so bitterly familiar to the unfortunate and the poor. "The heather-bell costs nothing!" he thought, looking contemptuously at the masses of rare and beautiful flowers that surrounded him ; "and the buttercups and daisies are as bright as the best of you!" He followed the artfully-contrived ovals and squares of the Italian garden, with a vagabond indifference to the symmetry of their construction and the ingenuity of their design. "How many pounds a foot did *you* cost?" he said, looking back with scornful eyes at the last path as he left it. "Wind away over high and low like the sheep-walk on the mountain-side, if you can!"

He entered the shrubbery which Allan had entered before him ; crossed the paddock and the rustic bridge beyond ; and reached the major's cottage. His ready mind seized the right conclusion, at the first sight of it ; and he stopped before the garden gate, to look at the trim little residence which would never have been empty, and would never have been let, but for Allan's ill-advised resolution to force the steward's situation on his friend.

The summer afternoon was warm ; the summer air was faint and still. On the upper and the lower floor of the cottage the windows were all open. From one of them, on the upper story, the sound of voices was startlingly audible in the quiet of the park, as Midwinter paused on the outer side of the garden enclosure. The voice of a woman, harsh, high, and angrily complaining—a voice with all the freshness and the melody gone, and with nothing but the hard power of it left—was the discordantly predominant sound. With it, from moment to moment, there mingled the deeper and quieter tones, soothing and compassionate, of the voice of a man. Although the distance was too great to allow Midwinter to dis-

tinguish the words that were spoken, he felt the impropriety of remaining within hearing of the voices, and at once stepped forward to continue his walk. At the same moment, the face of a young girl (easily recognizable as the face of Miss Milroy, from Allan's description of her) appeared at the open window of the room. In spite of himself, Midwinter paused to look at her. The expression of the bright young face, which had smiled so prettily on Allan, was weary and disheartened. After looking out absently over the park she suddenly turned her head back into the room; her attention having been apparently struck by something that had just been said in it. "Oh, mamma, mamma," she exclaimed indignantly, "*how can you say such things!*" The words were spoken close to the window; they reached Midwinter's ears, and hurried him away before he heard more. But the self-disclosure of Major Milroy's domestic position had not reached its end yet. As Midwinter turned the corner of the gardener's fence, a tradesman's boy was handing a parcel in at the wicket gate to the woman servant. "Well," said the boy, with the irrepressible impudence of his class, "*how is the missus?*" The woman lifted her hand to box his ears. "*How is the missus?*" she repeated, with an angry toss of her head as the boy ran off. "*If it would only please God to take the missus, it would be a blessing to everybody in the house.*"

No such ill-omened shadow as this had passed over the bright domestic picture of the inhabitants of the cottage, which Allan's enthusiasm had painted for the contemplation of his friend. It was plain that the secret of the tenants had been kept from the landlord so far. Five minutes more of walking brought Midwinter to the park gates. "Am I fated to see nothing and hear nothing to-day which can give me heart and hope for the future?" he thought, as he angrily swung back the lodge gate. "Even the people Allan has let the cottage to, are people whose lives are embittered by a household misery which it is *my* misfortune to have found out!"

He took the first road that lay before him, and walked on, noticing little, immersed in his own thoughts. More than an hour passed before the necessity of turning back entered his mind. As soon as the idea occurred to him, he consulted his watch, and determined to retrace his steps, so as to be at the house in good time to meet Allan on his return. Ten minutes of walking brought him back to a point at which three roads met; and one moment's observation of the place satisfied him that he had entirely failed to notice, at the time, by which of the three roads he had advanced. No sign-post was to be seen; the country on either side was lonely and flat, intersected by broad drains and ditches. Cattle were grazing here and there; and a windmill rose in the distance above the pollard willows that fringed the low horizon. But not a house was to be seen, and not a human creature appeared on the visible perspective of any one of the three roads. Midwinter glanced back in the only direction left to look at—the direction of the road along which he had just been walking. There, to his relief, was the figure of a man, rapidly advancing towards him, of whom he could ask his way.

The figure came on, clad from head to foot in dreary black—a moving blot on the brilliant white surface of the sun-brightened road. He was a lean, elderly, miserably respectable man. He wore a poor old black dress-coat, and a cheap brown wig, which made no pretence of being his own natural hair. Short black trousers clung like attached old servants round his wizen legs; and rusty black gaiters hid all they could of his knobbed ungainly feet. Black crape added its mite to the decayed and dingy wretchedness of his old beaver hat; black mohair in the obsolete form of a stock, drearily encircled his neck and rose as high as his haggard jaws. The one morsel of colour he carried about him, was a lawyer's bag of blue serge as lean and limp as himself. The one attractive feature in his clean-shaven, weary old face, was a neat set of teeth—teeth (as honest as his wig), which said plainly to all inquiring eyes, “We pass our nights on his looking-glass, and our days in his mouth.”

All the little blood in the man's body faintly reddened his fleshless cheeks as Midwinter advanced to meet him, and asked the way to Thorpe-Ambrose. His weak watery eyes looked hither and thither in a bewilderment painful to see. If he had met with a lion instead of a man, and if the few words addressed to him had been words expressing a threat instead of a question, he could hardly have looked more confused and alarmed than he looked now. For the first time in his life, Midwinter saw his own shy uneasiness in the presence of strangers reflected, with tenfold intensity of nervous suffering, in the face of another man—and that man old enough to be his father.

“Which do you please to mean, sir—the Town or the House? I beg your pardon for asking, but they both go by the same name in these parts.”

He spoke with a timid gentleness of tone, an ingratiatory smile, and an anxious courtesy of manner, all distressingly suggestive of his being accustomed to receive rough answers in exchange for his own politeness, from the persons whom he habitually addressed.

“I was not aware that both the House and the Town went by the same name,” said Midwinter: “I meant the House.” He instinctively conquered his own shyness as he answered in those words; speaking with a cordiality of manner which was very rare with him in his intercourse with strangers.

The man of miserable respectability seemed to feel the warm return of his own politeness gratefully: he brightened and took a little courage. His lean forefinger pointed eagerly to the right road. “That way, sir,” he said, “and when you come to two roads next, please take the left one of the two. I am sorry I have business the other way—I mean in the town. I should have been happy to go with you, and show you. Fine summer weather, sir, for walking? You can't miss your way if you keep to the left. Oh, don't mention it! I'm afraid I have detained you, sir. I wish you a pleasant walk back, and—good morning.”

By the time he had made an end of speaking (under an impression

apparently that the more he talked the more polite he would be) he had lost his courage again. He darted away down his own road, as if Midwinter's attempts to thank him, involved a series of trials too terrible to confront. In two minutes more, his black retreating figure had lessened in the distance till it looked again, what it had once looked already, a moving blot on the brilliant white surface of the sun-brightened road.

The man ran strangely in Midwinter's thoughts while he took his way back to the house. He was at a loss to account for it. It never occurred to him that he might have been insensibly reminded of himself, when he saw the plain traces of past misfortune and present nervous suffering in the poor wretch's face. He blindly resented his own perverse interest in this chance foot-passenger on the high road, as he had resented all else that had happened to him since the beginning of the day. "Have I made another unlucky discovery?" he asked himself impatiently. "Shall I see this man again, I wonder? who can he be?"

Time was to answer both those questions before many days more had passed over the inquirer's head.

Allan had not returned when Midwinter reached the house. Nothing had happened but the arrival of a message of apology from the cottage. "Major Milroy's compliments, and he was sorry that Mrs. Milroy's illness would prevent his receiving Mr. Armadale that day." It was plain that Mrs. Milroy's occasional fits of suffering (or of ill-temper) created no mere transitory disturbance of the tranquillity of the household. Drawing this natural inference, after what he had himself heard at the cottage nearly three hours since, Midwinter withdrew into the library to wait patiently among the books until his friend came back.

It was past six o'clock, when the well-known hearty voice was heard again in the hall. Allan burst into the library, in a state of irrepressible excitement, and pushed Midwinter back unceremoniously into the chair from which he was just rising, before he could utter a word.

"Here's a riddle for you, old boy!" cried Allan. "Why am I like the resident manager of the Augean stable, before Hercules was called in to sweep the litter out? Because I have had my place to keep up, and I've gone and made an infernal mess of it! Why don't you laugh? By George, he doesn't see the point! Let's try again. Why am I like the resident manager? —"

"For God's sake, Allan, be serious for a moment!" interposed Midwinter. "You don't know how anxious I am to hear if you have recovered the good opinion of your neighbours."

"That's just what the riddle was intended to tell you!" rejoined Allan. "But if you will have it in so many words, my own impression is that you would have done better not to disturb me under that tree in the park. I've been calculating it to a nicety, and I beg to inform you that I have sunk exactly three degrees lower in the estimation of the resident gentry since I had the pleasure of seeing you last."

" You *will* have your joke out," said Midwinter, bitterly. " Well, if I can't laugh, I can wait."

" My dear fellow, I'm not joking ; I really mean what I say. You shall hear what happened—you shall have a report in full of my first visit. It will do, I can promise you, as a sample for all the rest. Mind this, in the first place, I've gone wrong, with the best possible intentions. When I started for these visits, I own I was angry with that old brute of a lawyer, and I certainly had a notion of carrying things with a high hand. But it wore off somehow on the road ; and the first family I called on, I went in as I tell you with the best possible intentions. Oh dear, dear ! there was the same spick-and-span reception room for me to wait in, with the neat conservatory beyond, which I saw again and again and again at every other house I went to afterwards. There was the same choice selection of books for me to look at—a religious book, a book about the Duke of Wellington, a book about sporting, and a book about nothing in particular, beautifully illustrated with pictures. Down came papa with his nice white hair, and mamma with her nice lace cap ; down came young Mister with the pink face and the straw-coloured whiskers, and young Miss with the plump cheeks and the large petticoats. Don't suppose there was the least unfriendliness on my side ; I always began with them in the same way—I insisted on shaking hands all round. That staggered them to begin with. When I came to the sore subject next—the subject of the public reception—I give you my word of honour I took the greatest possible pains with my apologies. It hadn't the slightest effect ; they let my apologies in at one ear and out at the other, and then waited to hear more. Some men would have been disheartened : I tried another way with them ; I addressed myself to the master of the house, and put it pleasantly next. ' The fact is,' I said, ' I wanted to escape the speechifying—my getting up, you know, and telling you to your face, you're the best of men, and I beg to propose your health ; and you're getting up, and telling me to my face, I'm the best of men, and you beg to thank me ; and so on, man after man, praising each other and pestering each other all round the table.' That's how I put it, in an easy, light-handed, convincing sort of way. Do you think any of them took it in the same friendly spirit ? Not one ! It's my belief they had got their speeches ready for the reception, with the flags and the flowers, and that they're secretly angry with me for stopping their open mouths just as they were ready to begin. Anyway, whenever we came to the matter of the speechifying (whether they touched it first or I), down I fell in their estimation the first of those three steps I told you of just now. Don't suppose I made no efforts to get up again ! I made desperate efforts. I found they were all anxious to know what sort of life I had led before I came in for the Thorpe-Ambrose property, and I did my best to satisfy them. And what came of that, do you think ? Hang me, if I didn't disappoint them for the second time ! When they found out that I had actually never been to Eton or Harrow, or Oxford or Cambridge, they were

quite dumb with astonishment. I fancy they thought me a sort of outlaw. At any rate, they all froze up again—and down I fell the second step in their estimation. Never mind ! I wasn't to be beaten ; I had promised you to do my best, and I did it. I tried cheerful small-talk about the neighbourhood next. The women said nothing in particular ; the men, to my unutterable astonishment, all began to condole with me. I shouldn't be able to find a pack of hounds, they said, within twenty miles of my house ; and they thought it only right to prepare me for the disgracefully careless manner in which the Thorpe-Ambrose Covers had been preserved. I let them go on condoling with me, and then what do you think I did ? I put my foot in it again. 'Oh, don't take that to heart !' I said ; 'I don't care two straws about hunting or shooting, either. When I meet with a bird in my walk, I can't for the life of me feel eager to kill it—I rather like to see the bird flying about and enjoying itself.' You should have seen their faces ! They had thought me a sort of outlaw before ; now they evidently thought me mad. Dead silence fell upon them all ; and down I tumbled the third step in the general estimation. It was just the same at the next house, and the next, and the next. The devil possessed us all, I think. 'It *would* come out, now in one way and now in another, that I couldn't make speeches—that I had been brought up without a university education—and that I could enjoy a ride on horseback without galloping after a wretched stinking fox or a poor distracted little hare. Those three unlucky defects of mine are not excused, it seems, in a country gentleman (especially when he has dodged a public reception to begin with). I think I got on best, upon the whole, with the wives and daughters. The women and I always fell, sooner or later, on the subject of Mrs. Blanchard and her niece. We invariably agreed that they had done wisely in going to Florence ; and the only reason we had to give for our opinion was—that we thought their minds would be benefited after their sad bereavement, by the contemplation of the masterpieces of Italian Art. Every one of the ladies—I solemnly declare it—at every house I went to, came sooner or later to Mrs. and Miss Blanchard's bereavement, and the masterpieces of Italian Art. What we should have done without that bright idea to help us, I really don't know. The one pleasant thing at any of the visits was when we all shook our heads together, and declared that the masterpieces would console them. As for the rest of it, there's only one thing more to be said. What I might be in other places I don't know—I'm the wrong man in the wrong place here. Let me muddle on for the future in my own way, with my own few friends ; and ask me anything else in the world, as long as you don't ask me to make any more calls on my neighbours."

With that characteristic request, Allan's report of his exploring expedition among the resident gentry came to a close. For a moment Midwinter remained silent. He had allowed Allan to run on from first to last without uttering a word on his side. The disastrous result of the white—coming after what had happened earlier in the day ; and threat-

ening Allan, as it did, with exclusion from all local sympathies at the very outset of his local career—had broken down Midwinter's power of resisting the stealthily-depressing influence of his own superstition. It was with an effort that he now looked up at Allan; it was with an effort that he roused himself to answer.

"It shall be as you wish," he said, quietly. "I am sorry for what has happened—but I am not the less obliged to you, Allan, for having done what I asked you."

His head sank on his breast; and the fatalist resignation which had once already quieted him on board the Wreck, now quieted him again. "What *must* be, *will* be," he thought once more. "What have I to do with the future, and what has he?"

"Cheer up!" said Allan. "Your affairs are in a thriving condition at any rate. I paid one pleasant visit in the town, which I haven't told you of yet. I've seen Pedgift, and Pedgift's son, who helps him in the office. They're the two jolliest lawyers I ever met with in my life—and what's more, they can produce the very man you want to teach you the steward's business."

Midwinter looked up quickly. Distrust of Allan's discovery was plainly written in his face already; but he said nothing.

"I thought of you," Allan proceeded, "as soon as the two Pedgifts and I had had a glass of wine all round to drink to our friendly connection. The finest sherry I ever tasted in my life; I've ordered some of the same—but that's not the question just now. In two words I told these worthy fellows your difficulty, and in two seconds old Pedgift understood all about it. 'I have got the man in my office,' he said, 'and before the audit-day comes, I'll place him with the greatest pleasure at your friend's disposal.'"

At this last announcement, Midwinter's distrust found its expression in words. He questioned Allan unsparingly. The man's name, it appeared, was Bashwood. He had been some time (how long, Allan could not remember) in Mr. Pedgift's service. He had been previously steward to a Norfolk gentleman (name forgotten) in the westward district of the county. He had lost the steward's place, through some domestic trouble, in connection with his son, the precise nature of which Allan was not able to specify. Pedgift vouched for him, and Pedgift would send him to Thorpe-Ambrose two or three days before the rent-day dinner. He could not be spared, for office reasons, before that time. There was no need to fidget about it; Pedgift laughed at the idea of there being any difficulty with the tenants. Two or three days' work over the steward's books with a man to help Midwinter who practically understood that sort of thing, would put him all right for the audit; and the other business would keep till afterwards.

"Have you seen this Mr. Bashwood yourself, Allan?" asked Midwinter, still obstinately on his guard.

"No," replied Allan; "he was out—out with the bag, as young

Pedgiff called it. They tell me he's a decent elderly man. A little broken by his troubles, and a little apt to be nervous and confused in his manner with strangers ; but thoroughly competent and thoroughly to be depended on—those are Pedgiff's own words."

Midwinter paused and considered a little, with a new interest in the subject. The strange man whom he had just heard described, and the strange man of whom he had asked his way where the three roads met, were remarkably like each other. Was this another link in the fast-lengthening chain of events ? Midwinter grew doubly determined to be careful, as the bare doubt that it might be so passed through his mind.

" When Mr. Bashwood comes," he said, " will you let me see him, and speak to him, before anything definite is done ? "

" Of course I will ! " rejoined Allan. He stopped and looked at his watch. " And I'll tell you what I'll do for you, old boy, in the meantime," he added ; " I'll introduce you to the prettiest girl in Norfolk ! There's just time to run over to the cottage before dinner. Come along, and be introduced to Miss Milroy."

" You can't introduce me to Miss Milroy to-day," replied Midwinter ; and he repeated the message of apology which had been brought from the major that afternoon. Allan was surprised and disappointed ; but he was not to be foiled in his resolution to advance himself in the good graces of the inhabitants of the cottage. After a little consideration he hit on a means of turning the present adverse circumstances to good account. " I'll show a proper anxiety for Mrs. Milroy's recovery," he said gravely. " I'll send her a basket of strawberries, with my best respects, to-morrow morning."

Nothing more happened to mark the end of that first day in the new house.

The one noticeable event of the next day was another disclosure of Mrs. Milroy's infirmity of temper. Half-an-hour after Allan's basket of strawberries had been delivered at the cottage, it was returned to him intact (by the hands of the invalid lady's nurse), with a short and sharp message, shortly and sharply delivered. " Mrs. Milroy's compliments, and thanks. Strawberries invariably disagreed with her." If this curiously petulant acknowledgment of an act of politeness was intended to irritate Allan, it failed entirely in accomplishing its object. Instead of being offended with the mother, he sympathized with the daughter. " Poor little thing," was all he said, " she must have a hard life of it with such a mother as that ! "

He called at the cottage himself later in the day, but Miss Milroy was not to be seen ; she was engaged upstairs. The major received his visitor in his working apron—far more deeply immersed in his wonderful clock, and far less readily accessible to outer influences than Allan had seen him at their first interview. His manner was as kind as before ; but not a word more could be extracted from him on the subject of his wife, than that Mrs. Milroy " had not improved since yesterday."

The two next days passed quietly and uneventfully. Allan persisted in making his inquiries at the cottage; but all he saw of the major's daughter was a glimpse of her on one occasion, at a window on the bed-room floor. Nothing more was heard from Mr. Pedgift; and Mr. Bashwood's appearance was still delayed. Midwinter declined to move in the matter until time enough had passed to allow of his first hearing from Mr. Brock, in answer to the letter which he had addressed to the rector on the night of his arrival at Thorpe-Ambrose. He was unusually silent and quiet, and passed most of his hours in the library among the books. The time wore on wearily. The resident gentry acknowledged Allan's visit by formally leaving their cards. Nobody came near the house afterwards; the weather was monotonously fine. Allan grew a little restless and dissatisfied. He began to resent Mrs. Milroy's illness; he began to think regretfully of his deserted yacht.

The next day—the twentieth—brought some news with it from the outer world. A message was delivered from Mr. Pedgift, announcing that his clerk, Mr. Bashwood, would personally present himself at Thorpe-Ambrose on the following day; and a letter in answer to Midwinter was received from Mr. Brock.

The letter was dated the 18th, and the news which it contained raised, not Allan's spirits only, but Midwinter's as well. On the day on which he wrote, Mr. Brock announced that he was about to journey to London; having been summoned thither on business connected with the interests of a sick relative, to whom he stood in the position of trustee. The business completed, he had good hope of finding one or other of his clerical friends in the metropolis who would be able and willing to do duty for him at the rectory; and, in that case, he trusted to travel on from London to Thorpe-Ambrose in a week's time or less. Under these circumstances, he would leave the majority of the subjects on which Midwinter had written to him to be discussed when they met. But as time might be of importance, in relation to the stewardship of the Thorpe-Ambrose estate, he would say at once that he saw no reason why Midwinter should not apply his mind to learning the steward's duties, and should not succeed in rendering himself invaluable serviceable in that way to the interests of his friend.

Leaving Midwinter reading and re-reading the rector's cheering letter, as if he was bent on getting every sentence in it by heart, Allan went out rather earlier than usual, to make his daily inquiry at the cottage—or, in plainer words, to make a fourth attempt at improving his acquaintance with Miss Milroy. The day had begun encouragingly, and encouragingly it seemed destined to go on. When Allan turned the corner of the second shrubbery, and entered the little paddock where he and the major's daughter had first met, there was Miss Milroy herself loitering to and fro on the grass, to all appearance on the watch for somebody.

She gave a little start when Allan appeared, and came forward without hesitation to meet him. She was not in her best looks. Her rosy com-

plexion had suffered under confinement to the house, and a marked expression of embarrassment clouded her pretty face.

"I hardly know how to confess it, Mr. Armadale," she said, speaking eagerly, before Allan could utter a word, "but I certainly ventured here this morning, in the hope of meeting with you. I have been very much distressed—I have only just heard, by accident, of the manner in which mamma received the present of fruit you so kindly sent to her. Will you try to excuse her? She has been miserably ill for years, and she is not always quite herself. After your being so very very kind to me (and to papa), I really could not help stealing out here in the hope of seeing you, and telling you how sorry I was. Pray forgive and forget, Mr. Armadale—pray do!" Her voice faltered over the last words, and, in her eagerness to make her mother's peace with him, she laid her hand on his arm.

Allan was himself a little confused. Her earnestness took him by surprise, and her evident conviction that he had been offended, honestly distressed him. Not knowing what else to do, he followed his instincts, and possessed himself of her hand to begin with.

"My dear Miss Milroy, if you say a word more you will distress me next," he rejoined, unconsciously pressing her hand closer and closer, in the embarrassment of the moment. "I never was in the least offended; I made allowances—upon my honour I did—for poor Mrs. Milroy's illness. Offended!" cried Allan, reverting energetically to the old complimentary strain. "I should like to have my basket of fruit sent back every day—if I could only be sure of its bringing you out into the paddock the first thing in the morning."

Some of Miss Milroy's missing colour began to appear again in her cheeks. "Oh, Mr. Armadale, there is really no end to your kindness," she said; "you don't know how you relieve me!" She paused; her spirits rallied with as happy a readiness of recovery as if they had been the spirits of a child; and her native brightness of temper sparkled again in her eyes, as she looked up, shyly smiling in Allan's face. "Don't you think," she asked demurely, "that it is almost time now to let go of my hand?"

Their eyes met. Allan followed his instincts for the second time. Instead of releasing her hand, he lifted it to his lips and kissed it. All the missing tints of the rosier sort returned to Miss Milroy's complexion on the instant. She snatched away her hand as if Allan had burnt it.

"I'm sure that's wrong, Mr. Armadale," she said—and turned her head aside quickly, for she was smiling in spite of herself.

"I meant it as an apology for—for holding your hand too long," stammered Allan. "An apology can't be wrong—can it?"

There are occasions (though not many) when the female mind accurately apprehends an appeal in the form of pure reason. This was one of the occasions. An abstract proposition had been presented to Miss Milroy, and Miss Milroy was convinced. If it was meant as an apology, that (she admitted) made all the difference. "I only hope," said the little coquette,

looking at him slyly, "you're not misleading me. Not that it matters much now," she added, with a serious shake of her head. "If we have committed any improprieties, Mr. Armadale, we are not likely to have the opportunity of committing many more."

"You're not going away?" exclaimed Allan in great alarm.

"Worse than that, Mr. Armadale. My new governess is coming."

"Coming?" repeated Allan. "Coming already?"

"As good as coming, I ought to have said—only I didn't know you wished me to be so very particular. We got the answers to the advertisements this morning. Papa and I opened them and read them together half an hour ago—and we both picked out the same letter from all the rest. I picked it out, because it was so prettily expressed; and papa picked it out, because the terms were so reasonable. He is going to send the letter up to grandmamma in London, by to-day's post; and if she finds everything satisfactory, on inquiry, the governess is to be engaged. You don't know how dreadfully nervous I am getting about it already—a strange governess is such an awful prospect. But it is not quite so bad as going to school; and I have great hopes of this new lady, because she writes such a nice letter! As I said to papa, it almost reconciles me to her horrid, unromantic name."

"What is her name?" asked Allan. "Brown? Grubb? Scraggs? Anything of that sort?"

"Hush! hush! Nothing quite so horrible as that. Her name is Gwilt. Dreadfully unpoetical, isn't it? Her reference must be a respectable person, though; for she lives in the same part of London as grandmamma. Stop, Mr. Armadale! we are going the wrong way. No; I can't wait to look at those lovely flowers of yours this morning—and (many thanks) I can't accept your arm. I have stayed here too long already. Papa is waiting for his breakfast; and I must run back every step of the way. Thank you for making those kind allowances for mamma; thank you again and again—and good-by!"

"Won't you shake hands?" asked Allan.

She gave him her hand. "No more apologies, if you please, Mr. Armadale," she said saucily. Once more their eyes met; and once more the plump dimpled little hand found its way to Allan's lips. "It isn't an apology this time!" cried Allan, precipitately defending himself. "It's—it's a mark of respect."

She started back a few steps, and burst out laughing. "You won't find me in your grounds again, Mr. Armadale," she said merrily, "till I have got Miss Milroy to take care of me!" With that farewell, she gathered up her skirts, and ran back across the paddock at the top of her speed.

Allan stood watching her in speechless admiration till she was out of sight. His second interview with Miss Milroy had produced an extraordinary effect on him. For the first time since he had become the master of Thorpe-Ambrose, he was absorbed in serious consideration of what he owed to his new position in life. "The question is," pondered

Allan, "whether I hadn't better set myself right with my neighbours by becoming a married man? I'll take the day to consider; and if I keep in the same mind about it, I'll consult Midwinter to-morrow morning."

When the morning came, and when Allan descended to the breakfast-room, resolute to consult his friend on the obligations that he owed to his neighbours in general, and to Miss Milroy in particular, no Midwinter was to be seen. On making inquiry it appeared that he had been observed in the hall; that he had taken from the table a letter which the morning's post had brought to him; and that he had gone back immediately to his own room. Allan at once ascended the stairs again, and knocked at his friend's door.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Not just now," was the answer.

"You have got a letter, haven't you?" persisted Allan. "Any bad news? Anything wrong?"

"Nothing. I'm not very well this morning. Don't wait breakfast for me; I'll come down as soon as I can."

No more was said on either side. Allan returned to the breakfast-room a little disappointed. He had set his heart on rushing headlong into his consultation with Midwinter, and here was the consultation indefinitely delayed. "What an odd fellow he is!" thought Allan. "What on earth can he be doing, locked in there by himself?"

He was doing nothing. He was sitting by the window, with the letter which had reached him that morning, open in his hand. The handwriting was Mr. Brock's, and the words written were these:—

"My dear Midwinter,—I have literally only two minutes before post-time to tell you that I have just met (in Kensington Gardens) with the woman, whom we both only know, thus far, as the woman with the red Paisley shawl. I have traced her and her companion (a respectable-looking elderly lady) to their residence—after having distinctly heard Allan's name mentioned between them. Depend on my not losing sight of the woman until I am satisfied that she means no mischief at Thorpe-Ambrose; and expect to hear from me again as soon as I know how this strange discovery is to end.—Very truly yours, DECIMUS BROCK."

After reading the letter for the second time Midwinter folded it up thoughtfully, and placed it in his pocket-book, side by side with the manuscript narrative of Allan's dream.

"Your discovery will not end with you, Mr. Brock," he said. "Do what you will with the woman, when the time comes the woman will be here."

He looked for a moment in the glass—saw that he had composed himself sufficiently to meet Allan's eye—and went downstairs to take his place at the breakfast-table.

Hurses Wanted.

THERE must have been many people who thought, on glancing at the results of the last Census, that our countrywomen greatly need to have their attention drawn to certain facts which nearly concern them: and some recent incidents have confirmed this belief. Such facts as the following should not be so new or strange as we imagine they will be to such Englishwomen as will read what I am writing.

It appears that the women of our country, above twenty years of age, who earn their own maintenance, are numbered by millions. One-third of the whole number are independent workers; that is, they are reckoned over and above the shopkeepers' wives and farmers' daughters, and shoemakers' and tailors' wives and children who take their share in the family calling. One third of our countrywomen over twenty years old, have an occupation of their own, and earn a subsistence for themselves, as men do. Moreover, of the unmarried women above the same age, three-fourths work for their living in this way: and when the widows are included with the spinsters, no less than four-fifths of the whole number are found to be of the self-supporting class. It seems to me that facts like these ought to stop some talk, and to check some feelings which abound far too much among us. Any pretence of horror or disgust at women having to work, is mere affectation in a country and time when half the women must work in order to live, and when one-third of them must be independent workers. Beside the magnitude of such facts, the pride of the minority—and especially of the women who really are unoccupied—appears very small indeed. Even the anxious solicitude of fathers, who dread the very notion of any express and definite occupation for their daughters, looks like a mistake when we learn how small is the proportion of women who can be genteel,—if gentility consists in doing nothing appreciable. The result of such anxiety on the part of parents is too often that, on their death, their daughters have to try, in a feeble unprepared way, to do something for a living; or, if they are left independent, to wear out a maiden life with such spirits as they may—devoid as it is of natural objects and interests, in which the wives and mothers on the one hand, and the working women on the other, have the advantage of them. In our time, and under present circumstances, the women of the United Kingdom are more numerous than the men; and the disproportion is continually on the increase, from emigration and other causes. Each census accordingly exhibits a growing proportion of female workers, and especially of independent bread-winners; and while this goes on, the forlornness of female idleness, and the folly of pride in the gentility of idleness, will become more and more striking.

"What are all these workers doing?" it will be asked ; "because it still seems the most difficult thing in the world to provide educated women, or middle-class women whether educated or not, with the means of self-support. We are heart-sick of hearing of those wretched governesses, who, after an irksome and weary life of work, are destitute in their old age : some blind, some deaf, some paralytic, and a multitude diseased and worn out ; and scarcely one in a hundred who has earned enough to live upon in the barest way ; there is nothing in this to reconcile one to the thought of Englishwomen having to work more and more. And here are the Social Science reformers trying to open new employments to educated women. Perhaps they are right ; perhaps somebody must do it, if there are more and more women who must support themselves ; but, judging by the poor governesses, it is a dismal task and a dreary prospect."

This has hitherto been true enough, and it would be true still if gentlewomen must be governesses because they are poor ; or if they must spend their lives in trying to teach without having ever been educated themselves. The prospect would be dreary enough if women's work was for ever to be too ill-paid to admit of a provision for infirmity and old age ; and if the labour of educated or middle-class women was to be the worst paid of all. Let us see what the workers are doing, from the genteeliest of poor ladies down to the maid-of-all-work and the factory girl.

We find it roughly set down that one-fourth of our working country-women are engaged in business of some respectable sort, established on their own means : and these live by profits. Another fourth are employed in manufactures or agriculture,—some getting good wages, and others very low ones. Another fourth are actually engaged in the preparation of dress,—in the making, mending, and washing of apparel. The remaining fourth are in service. The dress-preparers are half a million, and the female servants are somewhat more, viz. between six and seven hundred thousand.

"Where, then, are the governesses?" it will be asked. They are ranked in the last census with the professional classes, and their number is set down as 24,770. This is probably less than many would expect from the proportion always out of work, or giving their toil for a bare living ; and when it is compared with the quarter million of milliners and dressmakers, and even with the humbler sempresses, it seems as if so moderate a number ought to be able to earn a comfortable subsistence. I can only say briefly here, that such would be the prospect, doubtless, if the candidates were, as a body, better qualified, and less eager to work for anything or nothing beyond daily bread. While the mere need of bread drives any considerable proportion of them into the profession unprepared, they will live in poverty and degradation, and die in destitution.

All this looks very miserable ; and it does not need the master to think of the fate of women in other occupations. Dairywomen and field-labourers get worn out at an early age, and can lay by little or nothing. London was shocked when told by Prince Albert how large a

proportion of female servants die in the workhouse. The fate of the needlewomen, now that their trade is passing from them, is too familiar to us; and so is that of the dressmaker. The women engaged in some kinds of manufacture earn a good deal more; but they are not usually qualified to handle their money wisely. They waste their pay sadly, and end by having nothing when they want it most. Are we then to suppose that no women but the capitalists can earn a comfortable independence by their own industry? Must we stop at the class of women who have shops, and farms, and keep inns and lodging-houses, and conduct some manufacture? Are these all?

Here there always arises a cry about the enormous amounts of money gained by great actresses and singers, and by a few authors. The fact is indisputable: but the number is too small to render any comparison possible. Our maids-of-all-work are little under half a million in number; and women engaged in literature were at the last census 185; and of these few, a large proportion have probably no more money laid by than the maids-of-all-work. As for the actresses and opera-singers, the rich ones are even more scarce than the authoresses who earn their thousands upon thousands.

What can be more disheartening than all this looks! Everybody seems to feel it so. "Here," says one and another, "are half our country-women working, and so many more pressing for subsistence on any terms that we do not know which way to turn on their behalf. We discover new occupations for them; but meantime some old one is dying out; and we always have some helpless crowd on our hands, just when we had opened a fresh road into the industrial field. As soon as we have set one class telegraphing, or law-copying, or engraving, or printing, or book-keeping, we have ten times the number cast adrift by the sewing-machine! And the whole prospect is so poor! the pay so low! and so little choice of occupation for women, at best! All the employments *natural* to women were overstocked long ago; we are now trying an experiment with the *admissible* ones,—hampered and vexed at every step by the jealousy and ill-will of men, who are as dead set against women doing anything but sewing as the Coventry men who would not let their wives and daughters touch ribbons first of watches afterwards; or the Staffordshire potters who will not permit the female workers to paint with the *rest* (for steadyng the hand) which is used by the stronger sex. It really seems as if no branch of female industry is ever to be so paid as that women can be independent for life; and the whole thing is so disheartening that one is glad to turn one's mind from it altogether."

Such is the common view among kind-hearted people; and such is the too common disposition to dismiss the whole subject. Who would imagine that all the time there is a vocation for women almost entirely neglected in this country;—an occupation combining the advantages which Adam Smith represents as alternatives—of social repose and pecuniary profit;—an employment undisturbed by any jealousy of man, congenial with all the best instincts of women, universally honoured; and

better paid than any other woman's work, except, as has been said, that of queens and of actresses! Yet those who must know, tell us that so it is: and the very few who at all apprehend the magnitude of the interest to our countrymen, ask what *can* be the meaning of such an apathy as the women of England are showing in regard to such an opportunity as was never offered to them before.

The occupation is NURSING. The opportunity consists in the fact that there is an immediate and urgent demand for many thousands—even tens of thousands—of trained nurses, while hosts of employers are ready to respect and cherish them, and to pay them handsomely; and means of training are open to many more than show any wish to make use of the advantage. “What *can* it mean?” asks one and another. We must see if we can make it out.

In order to do this, I have been looking over circulars of Societies for the benefit of women, programmes of female occupations, sections of the census, treatises on Woman's Mission, and the like; in short, everything bearing on the subject of female industry in this country; and I find nothing whatever about nursing or nurses, beyond a line or two in tables of figures, and a mere passing allusion when the occupations of women are recited. This does seem strange, in days when so much has been preached and printed about “Woman's Mission,” and such complaints have been made of the poor remuneration of women's work. It would seem to a simple-minded person that if a mission has been appointed to Woman, it is that of nursing the sick; and that if women desire pecuniary independence they should qualify themselves for the employment which secures it. If it is not so, why is it not?

My own belief is that scarcely anybody in England knows anything whatever about what the state of things is, and what it ought to be. The Schools and Homes for Nurses contain women, and the Hospitals and the medical profession contain men, who know how we stand in regard to the management of the sick; but I can explain the general indifference only by the supposition of an ignorance which conceals the need, and at the same time perverts the whole aspect of the occupation, and gives it no chance with those who might be useful and happy in it. We heard a great deal about it during the Crimean war; and none were more displeased and grieved at the nonsense that was then talked than the devoted women who went to the camps and hospitals in the East, to save life and relieve misery as far as they could. While they were contending with the hardest and most prosaic difficulties, and seeing men die of sheer hunger and dirt, they had little relish for the romancing of the day—for the fervours of enthusiasts who would have gone out as heroines—or for the pictures of their service held up in novels or poems, in which the nun-like nurse finds her lover in a hospital, cures him, and goes off with him, unmindful of all engagements and of all duties voluntarily undertaken. We grew tired of hospital-romancing years ago; and there is really no sign at all of our having since troubled ourselves to inquire what the facts are of

the provision for the nursing of the sick in the United Kingdom. The Nightingale Fund was subscribed—that was one good deed ; it was put into the hands of worthy trustees—and that was another ; but if it was inquired how much interest the public, or any part of the public, takes in the working of the institution, I fear the answer would be very mortifying.

Before the Russian war turned the attention of the country upon the provision for the care of the wounded and sick, the number of professional nurses in Great Britain was 25,466, besides 2,882 midwives. This is little more than one to every thousand of the population. And who were these nurses? and what was their quality?

To the best of my belief the qualified nurse, trained in a hospital and regularly taught her business, was a personage scarcely heard of or imagined beyond the precincts of three or four (if so many) religious establishments, where ladies devoted themselves to the work in the conventional spirit : and these were of recent origin. As for the rest, there was the traditional monthly nurse, and her sister of the sick-room—ignorant, gossiping, full of mischievous superstitions and fancies, rapacious, self-indulgent, and too often the foe of patient and doctor, instead of the best friend of both. Where the moral qualities were right, the professional skill was rare (beyond the routine of childbed treatment). There were no means of education for the treatment even of fevers and the commonest maladies, much less of surgical cases ; and in those days the hired nurse was engaged as a help, as another pair of hands, rather than as the great means of immediate alleviation to the sufferer and of the readiest cure. But these superior nurses of their time were few in comparison with the lower sort, whose portraits we have from our novelists, scarcely caricatured even in Mrs. Gamp. These abounded in the towns, where their customers were the small shopkeepers, artisans, &c. I fear we may use the present tense in regard to these, as we may about the village nurses throughout the country. Women who cannot do anything else seem to think they may be nurses, as they used to take school-keeping to be their trade. If they are old and wheezy ; if, not being old, they are hard of hearing or have weak eyes, so as to be unfit for service, they seek engagements as nurses, and go the round of the village wives in their confinements, and are called in at the latter stage of all fatal illnesses within five miles. These are the women who help the local "bone-setter" to custom, because "doctors who are very good at physic don't know anything about the bones." These are the women who take monstrous liberties with the stomach of the new-born infant, and try a charm in anxious cases, because "if it does no good it will do no harm," and who give cordials without the doctor's knowledge, and keep the window shut against his orders, and act upon their own fantastical notions of the interior of the human frame, instead of deferring to his professional wisdom. These two orders of nurses, with the gradations between them, and the nurses employed in the public hospitals, make up the 25,000 recorded in the census of 1851. The odd hundreds would more than account for

the ladies who formed the religious nursing societies of the day. I need hardly explain that the nurses whom we commonly call nursemaids are not included here, though they are in juxtaposition in the census returns. Of the 39,000 of that class of domestic servants, or care-takers of children, nearly half were between the ages of five and twenty. So much the worse for the children ! But that sort of nursing has no connection with my present subject.

Within the last dozen years, there has been just so much progress made as to give us a little taste of the comfort of a trained nurse in the most anxious seasons of domestic life, and to make us long for more. We do intensely long for more ; but at present it is not to be had. The richest and greatest can no more depend on getting good nursing at need than the humblest ; for the demand immeasurably exceeds the supply. There is even, according to the census of 1861, a falling off in the supply, the number (including the midwifery nurses) being 27,618 to the 28,848 of ten years before. The lady Superintendents of the Homes and the managers of the Nightingale Fund are perplexed in the extreme by applications for nurses, on the one hand, which they cannot satisfy, and, on the other, by constant difficulty in getting their number of Sisters and probationers filled up. If every such Home or school of nursing was full, and sent out its members, as they became qualified, to open other Homes and schools ; if every hospital in the country afforded the training that is given at St. Thomas's and King's College Hospitals, and if every pupil on leaving became the teacher of a body of nurses, all these supplies together would not meet the needs of the country and its colonies ; and yet this primary number, this earliest class of learners, cannot be kept up without difficulty.

The inducements are so great that it seems that they must prevail, if only they could be made known. What would be the lot of a hundred young women, now humble governesses, ay. or workers in a millinery house in London, if they were transformed into trained nurses ? As governesses they have, perhaps, from ten to twenty pounds a year, for which they do nursemaids' work as well as their own. They are expected to wash and dress the children, and take them out walking, and to mend their clothes, and to keep their drawers and cupboards, and to give them their meals. For all this they get a mere present subsistence ; for their pay barely suffices for their dress. They have no position, no social consideration, no enjoyment of society, no respite, and, worst of all, no prospect. The milliner's lot might almost be thought the better of the two, but for the peril to health, and the suffering belonging to bodily ailments. As it is, there is for her, present malaise, and a blank and dark future. How is it with the trained nurse ? It is true, these are the palmy days of the profession, but it is with these present days that we have to deal ; and their brightest features are actual truths at the moment, and sure to remain so for a generation or two at least. It is true, also, that there are varieties of experience, here as everywhere, from varieties of temper and spirit among employers. There are Superintendents and Sisters who expect

too much of the hired working-nurses, and private employers who are selfish, ignorant, and, therefore, tyrannical. But it is not necessary to submit to tyranny and unreasonableness in the present state of the market; and the brighter view is the one which more truly represents the time.

A member of the sisterhood at one of the Homes is told by the Superintendent that she is wanted to go here, there, or somewhere else, where there is illness in the house. It is for them to choose which engagement of several to accept. If it is a smallpox case, the fee is probably double. At all events, the pay is so good that the nurse may confidently reckon on being in a house where her personal comfort will be secured by the usages of the family, and where she will have persons of some education and refinement to deal with. The choice is made at once, and she starts for her destination. She finds herself eagerly looked for and welcomed. Instead of being pushed aside, imposed upon and mortified, like the overworked governess, she finds the whole household waiting, as it were, on her opinion and her advice. Perhaps it is the head of the family who is ill. Wife, children, and servants have done what they could for him; but they are too anxious, too unassured, too inexperienced to judge of things rightly, and to do things well. The trained nurse will guide their judgments and their efforts, and tell them what to think and to do. Before she has been a quarter of an hour in the sick-room, the bed is more comfortable than it has been since the illness began; somehow, the pillow is so placed that the head will lie easy; and the patient says, "Don't move me—let me be:" in a few moments his eyes close, and presently he is asleep. By-and-by, he can take food—in the way she gives it. She knows how to make it, or have it made, and how to administer it without fuss and trouble. And so on, with all the bodily treatment, from the management of painful sores to the relief of nervous or feverish restlessness. Not less important is the relief of mind she has induced. The sick man reposes on her care: he asks without scruple for what he wants; he takes her word for his condition; and has one great danger the less to contend with in his struggle for life. The women of the house are all at her bidding—only too thankful to be told what to do. The physician is heartily glad to see her, and enters into a partnership of confidence and consultation at once. This is a somewhat different position from that of the humble governess or night-working milliner. And this reminds us of the comparative toil.

The trained nurse imposes her own terms for the husbanding of her own health. She is to be spared all the business which can as well be done by servants: she is to have her meals regularly and comfortably, and to take sufficient time for them; and they are to be of such quality as the exhaustion of her work renders necessary. Arrangements are to be made which shall secure her having sleep enough, and at safe intervals; and she must have an hour in the day for going out, to refresh mind and body in the open air. Dressmaker and governess cannot make such terms: but the qualified nurse may and ought. The first consideration,

in everybody's interest, is to keep her in health. Though this is only rational prudence, it will be easily seen how it tends, with everything else, to enhance the social consideration which attends her office.

If there is any hanging back in the reader's mind, at this point, any reluctance to regard the nurse's position as I represent it, it is probably for one of two reasons. All these advantages together will not counterbalance, the reader may say to himself, the painfulness and disagreeableness of the occupation. And again, there is a look of great selfishness in such a picture of the nurse's dignity and importance.

As to the distastefulness of the office,—the same thing is true, in a far more forcible way, of the profession of the surgeon: yet we have surgeons enough, and always shall have. Some of us may feel or fancy that we had rather sweep a crossing than have to operate on the human frame as surgeons must: and if so, we have only to avoid that profession. It would be folly to go further, and wonder that we have surgeons enough, while the fact is before our eyes that surgeons have a pride and pleasure in their occupation—a pride and pleasure always increasing, long after the first trials of nerve have been forgotten, and the very sense of them lost. In the same way, if young women feel that they had rather be household drudges and invalid sempstresses than tend the sick, let them be governesses at ten or twelve pounds a year, or needlewomen in a millinery establishment. But they ought to be aware, not only that every female infant born into the world is a nurse by nature, but that large numbers of those infants grow up with a positive liking for any and all the offices of the sick-room. As one little boy will run out at the back door as the dentist comes in at the front to draw mamma's tooth, while his brother—a predestined surgeon—mounts on a chair to look into mamma's mouth while it is done, so one little girl will turn pale at the sight of blood, while another will positively enjoy binding up a bad cut. Brother or cousin has got a terrible gash in whittling at his model boat; and to prevent mamma being frightened, the wound is washed and bound up on the spot: and the little damsel finds herself wishing that she could be called to other such accidents. She is the predestined nurse. And if the case is not often so clear, my reader has no right to conclude that a sufficient degree of readiness is not common; or that much aptitude and relish may not exist undiscovered till the occasion arises for ascertaining it. A multitude of women may find that they like the work in itself, however little they might have fancied that they should; and, for that matter, it is but too certain that very few have as yet thought of the case at all. I will add that, as the art of nursing advances and becomes diffused, its repulsive features will be continually softened, or will even disappear. Skilled nursing is no more like that of the last generation, or of the lower classes now, than St. Thomas's Hospital is like that at Scutari, when the building was full of stenches, and its inmates were without change of linen, and swarming with vermin. Those women who cannot relish the office of inducing and preserving cleanliness and freshness

in the sick-room, and purification in the worst cases of wounds, may at least perceive and admit that this freshness and purity are a great amelioration of the nurse's case, as well as of that of her patient.

As for the appeal to selfishness with which I may be charged, in showing, as I have done, the advantages of the position of the nurse at the present time, my immediate object was to compare the employment with others to which women resort much more abundantly. If women desire social consideration they can have it as nurses, that is all. If they have higher aims, so much the better ; they can, in the same career, have their higher satisfaction too. In connection with both his doubts, my reader really should consider a little what the satisfactions of the calling are ; and the more carefully from his being so very ready and able to form strong conceptions of the disagreeable part of the work.

It is no small satisfaction to lay the sufferer easily in bed at the outset ; and we may say the same of the whole round of reliefs which are at the command of the trained nurse. But what must it be to save life ! When an unskilled attendant, even the devoted wife, cannot get food into the mouth, and a ruder hand may even rap at the teeth, and worry away the last remains of strength, the trained nurse may find no difficulty and will cause no fatigue. If, during a critical night, she gives a little nourishment from one five minutes to another, almost expecting that the breath will be gone before the next, is it not a keen pleasure to perceive the breathing improve, to feel the pulse grow steadier, to see the expression of life return to the face, and to carry on the revival till the physician looks at him and says, " He is better ; he will do now ? " In less extreme cases are there not satisfactions as real, though less exciting ? After hours of restlessness, and when the hope of sleep for the patient that night seems vain, it is some comfort to try again ; to have the tempting cup or morsel ready in the highest style, to bathe the face and hands, to put hot bottles to the feet at that coldest hour of the twenty-four, and to say a few quiet words which shall set straight the unhinged mind ; and if there should be any success, if the warmth should be manifestly stealing through the frame, if the eyes should close before the weary question gets an answer, if the breathing should settle into that of sleep, is not this a pleasure worth having ? is not this an employment which has its privilege ? Is it not a blessed thing, when there are children down in fever, to see each little face brighten as the nurse comes near, and to observe how trustful and docile they are in her hands, because she knows how to give them ease when no one else can ? Is it not a blessing to be able to administer pleasures which the inexperienced dare not allow to the patient, or do not think of—the strong blast of wind in fever (which would cure in fever cases if it could be had steadily), the sunlight in certain states of weakness, the view from the window, and the many fanciful changes which suit the mood of the sick ? The way in which a skilled nurse can place pillows, so as to afford the exact relief which the patient did not know how to ask for, is sometimes like magic. To give

this comfort—to prevent bed-sores; to be the first to detect the form of the secondary illness after fever, so as to give the physician the earliest notice; to smooth over the trying season of convalescence, which nobody else understands; all this is happiness to a good nurse, more or less, in one way or another. The patient is unspeakably grateful to her when she secures him a little solitude. Everybody else is afraid of his being dull, or feeling neglected; and while he longs above everything to be alone, one comes in as soon as another goes out, till he almost believes his pain or weakness would be easy to bear if they would leave him to himself. He would not say so for the world; but the skilled nurse does not need to be told. She puts the little bell by his hand, tells him she shall be within call, promises that nobody shall enter till he pleases, and keeps the promise. Perhaps he sleeps; if not, he has had his wish, and is soothed. Now, these are satisfactions which may be pure from vainglory and every kind of selfishness; and they are as real as the hard work and prosaic duty by which they are obtained.

One of the very greatest blessings of the office is, that it leaves benefits behind it otherwise unattainable. It is scarcely possible that the house should not be a school of nursing for the time, for which every woman in it will be the better. Not only the ladies will gather new ideas, but the servants. The cook will have new notions of sick-diet, and the housemaid of cleanliness in chambers, and of bed-making, and managing the fire. If the servants are made to wait on the nurse, as they ought to do to save her all unnecessary fatigues, they ought to be glad, for their own sakes; for her mere presence and ways teach them much that they did not know they were ignorant of. Under the existing deficiency of nurses, it is no small service to render to society to improve the domestic care of the sick through hundreds of middle-class houses.

After all this review of the position, the speculator on the case has an impression that there must be something behind—some reason yet unrecognized for the absence of candidates for such an employment. Are nurses so gratefully regarded, and so considerately treated? And is the pecuniary reward so good as some people tell us?

As to the treatment, it varies, as I have said, with the sense, temper, and manners of the employer. Some ladies will pay any fee to obtain a nurse from a Home or school, will agree to the rules, and promise everything, and then behave as if the nurse was made of some material that would not wear out. The promise is that she shall have ten hours (the smallest reasonable allowance possible) in the twenty-four for bed, meals, and the open air; but in a little while she finds it impossible to get her clothes off for a week together, or to leave the sick-room for more than a nap when she can get it. It is true, the authorities should look to this; and doubtless they do when they are appealed to; but a humane nurse will rather comply with hard conditions than make difficulties in a season of family distress; but the fact gets abroad—by her subsequent exhaustion, if no otherwise—and it operates to deter. So does the fatigue caused

by the strong demand for nurses from the Homes and schools, when the nurse, just returned from the funeral of a patient, fatigued, depressed, and almost needing nursing herself, is sent out on a new duty before she has had the long nights of sleep, and the few easy days absolutely needful to fit her for another charge. This is constantly happening. The proper remedy is a fuller supply of skilled nurses; but, meantime, some are continually wearing out: and when they have to give up the vocation, and are seen broken down, and without means and without employment, it is not very surprising if observers say they had rather be governesses or domestic servants. The remedy for this mischief is in protecting the interests of the nurses by bringing thoughtless and selfish employers to reason, and showing them that they must take nurses on the nurses' own terms, or go without. The Superintendents of the Homes and schools must also be more strict than some of them have been in guarding the rights and protecting the health of the members of their household. The rest must be looked for from increase of numbers in the profession.

But about the pay? Well! about the pay there seems to be great confusion between the old and actual, and the new and now practicable earnings by nursing. In the last generation it was a very common thing—perhaps rather the rule than the exception—for professional nurses to be in an almshouse, or in the workhouse, or in some way dependent on charity, when past work. Most of us who are not young must have heard physicians speak of this fact with grave concern and indignation. It is true, those nurses were generally poor working-women, uneducated, and unfit for any change of occupation; but then, many were of a higher order than this; and they had much the same prospect before them for their latter years. Even so late as 1861, it appears by the census that of the 27,618 nurses in England and Wales, no less than 682 were in the workhouse—that is, nearly one in forty of their number. After being dismissed from hospitals and lunatic asylums, and dropped from private practice, they were seen to sink into poverty and dependence; and those of their relations and old friends who witnessed the process naturally concluded against the vocation. This is the impression which certainly is widely prevalent: and it may go some way towards accounting for the slowness of women in entering upon it.

In inquiring into the more modern case, we must look at the different ranks and orders separately.

Of the Superintendents of Homes on a religious basis we need only say that they may be ladies of independent means, or appointed to their function by authority or election—in short, by methods which have nothing to do with the market value of nursing service. There are other establishments where a superintendent or matron is the most necessary personage, and the most difficult to obtain, under any inducement that can be offered. This does appear very strange; for not only is this office one of considerable dignity and authority, and of less fatigue than most female bread-winning businesses, but it at present commands almost any pay. The

highest salaries given to women (except, as I said before, a rare singer or other public performer) can be, and would eagerly be, secured to competent matrons, by dozens or scores, if they could now be had. The number of educated women, with some faculty for organizing and training, who apply for instruction for the office of matron or superintendent of nurses is so small that the service suffers through the necessity of appointing persons of inferior qualifications to the post. Yet the position would seem to be more desirable than that of the governess in regard to dignity and independence, while there is no comparison in the pecuniary view. A highly qualified matron can obtain any terms she is likely to ask at a time when no money can represent her value.

The "Sisters" are some of them devoted to their work without hire or recompence of any kind. Some engaged in the occupation under a promise of a pension, sometimes fulfilled, but sometimes withdrawn on account of the insufficiency of the funds. Such is the statement deliberately affirmed by persons who claim to understand the case, while, on the other hand, persons who cannot but know the facts, declare that, even in the best establishments, the lack is of "Sisters"—the applicants being so few that the emoluments as well as the honours go a-begging.

Next, we come to the class—which should so far outnumber all the rest—of the salaried nurses in hospitals and asylums, and in Homes which supply the demand of private practice.

The trustees of the Nightingale Fund are well satisfied that money need not stand in the way of the training of any number of young women for service in hospitals or anywhere else. The demand is so great that money for the purpose is always forthcoming, if the candidates can be got, after the fund has distributed its income. That fund at present maintains and trains in St. Thomas's Hospital, eighteen women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five for at least a year each. Thus far, the eagerness to secure them at the year's end has been such that all have been immediately placed, and may be considered provided for for life. As many more are received as can be employed and trained in proportion to the number of patients; and of these, the expenses are paid by private patrons. In the last report of the Nightingale Fund, it is stated that the lowest salary received by any hospital nurse of their pupils is 20*l.* a year, and maintenance in everything but clothes. This lowest pay is certainly not high, being about equal to that of a provincial cook, or a good house-maid; but it is the lowest, while it includes an amount of personal comfort, and a permanence and security of employment, which the humble governess and the milliner's journeywoman can never hope for. What the higher hospital salaries are, I do not know. The certainty of a pension after a fixed age would fill the Homes very easily, if we may judge by what I am told of one, which gives 20*l.* a year after twelve years' service, and which does not suffer for want of applicants. In private practice, a skilled nurse may evidently demand her own terms; and a rich field of enterprise remains for those who, being trained, become the

trainers of others in the new schools which will be rising up everywhere. It is out of the question that the Nightingale Fund, or a few scattered Homes, can send out the many thousands of skilled nurses who are wanted throughout the empire—from the Fraser River round to the Irrawaddy. What they propose, and will achieve, is to send out nurses qualified to form centres of schools of workers like themselves. The whole system is a gradation of training. The fund (or some fund somewhere) trains to its purposes a Mrs. Wardroper, a woman of capacity, sense, and spirit, like the matron at St. Thomas's Hospital. She first makes herself mistress of the art of nursing, and then is ready to begin her proper function as matron. She selects her probationers among the applicants for training at St. Thomas's Hospital, and they enter there under her authority. They have board and lodging and washing in the hospital, at the cost of the Nightingale Fund, for a year; and they have a small payment in money quarterly, amounting for the year to 10*l.*, and some outer clothing; so that they are free of personal cares while undergoing their training. They learn their duties from the matron, the Sisters, and the resident medical officer; and if they make proper use of their opportunities, they come out qualified to instruct others in their turn. It is thus that the art of nursing must spread, as useful arts do, through society, to its humblest level. In their eagerness to demand good nursing, for the public service or private convenience, the rich are now ready to pay for the necessary training of probationers; and at each step of the descent down to the workhouse, the means will spring forth as they are wanted, if only we can find women and girls ready to be taught. There is a striking illustration of our wants and our willingness, as employers, in the story of what the St. John's House Training Institution is doing throughout the country. The admirable distinction of that establishment is that, while a religious society, it co-operates heartily with the great secular institution—King's College Hospital—thus strengthening the force of its religious aims by the best practical discipline; and, again, carrying its religious influence wherever its admirable practical training opens a way to it. Last year, ten women of its staff were trained in the lying-in ward of the hospital, and also passed some time in the general wards, learning how to nurse ordinary medical and surgical cases. Now, what do these women, and those of each successive year, do next? Some are engaged by "The Parochial Mission Women and Nurses' Association." Some are salaried by benevolent individuals in town or country, to attend the poor. Most of them go down to country parishes, where they practise under the sanction of the clergyman, or the ladies of the neighbourhood; and it is pleasant to hear of the readiness of the cottagers to pay what they can for good nursing.

Such a fact as this opens a glimpse of the area of demand for trained nurses; but it requires some contemplation of our whole case to understand what the present deficiency and the ultimate prospects really are. As we find ourselves at the moment in the country parish, let us see first what openings we find there.

Have my readers ever seen, or wished to see, a Village Hospital ? It is a large and good subject, that of the Village Hospital ; but I will now only touch upon its main points. When a rural labourer gets a cut with a scythe, or has an accident with his master's waggon, or the new steam-cultivator, or with horse or bull, or if he falls ill with fever or rheumatism, it is a melancholy chance for him in his home, where there is no sufficient room for a sick man, nor quiet, nor good diet, nor skilful nursing. Moreover, he is probably so far away from the doctor that he cannot possibly have the attention the doctor would wish. If proper medicines and good diet are sent, there is no certainty that they will be properly administered. If we fancy these liabilities existing in several cases at once, we shall see the wisdom of doing what has been done in certain rural districts—taking a small house, and fitting it up comfortably as a humble hospital, where the doctor can see those particular patients half-a-dozen times a day more easily than he could see them three times a week in their scattered homes. It is found easy to make arrangements with the men or their employers for a small payment out of the weekly wages, so as to give the patients a comfortable feeling of having a right to the advantages of the place ; and thus they enjoy with a certainty impossible in their homes the good diet, the cleanliness, quiet, and good nursing on which their lives, or their health and strength for life may depend. Now, the indispensable centre of the whole scheme is the trained nurse. She must be the matron, and, generally speaking, the nurse. When there are too many patients at once for her management she must have help ; and when there are none, she is the midwifery nurse of the village. The mention of help brings in the consideration of her usefulness as instructress in her art.

Wherever a sincere and rational effort has been made to train the girls in our National Schools in the arts of the household, it seems to have been successful ; and one striking instance of the success and benefit was published in *The Times*, a few years since, by a clergyman in Cheshire. A kitchen, for the benefit of the sick and the very poor, was established ; the sufferers—all who needed it in a population of 4,000—were supplied with the very best diet at a wonderfully small cost, while the children from the school learned to cook, and mightily enjoyed the lesson. There seems no reason why the other offices due to the sick should not be learned by village practice in like manner. The girls who will marry, or live with their parents, or go out to service, will have an incalculably better chance of welfare in life for being able to cook, and to wait upon others, and to provide for household cleanliness and neatness. If, having learned these things in the village hospital, one or more of their number should turn out specially fitted for the function of nurse, it will be a great blessing to all parties. Rural life will be a better thing than it has ever been yet, when the labouring class have their own hospital, and their young daughters are chosen to serve it, and invited to show their capability for the honourable and profitable calling of the nurse. But the very

first requisite is not yet attainable. To provide one nurse to each village in the kingdom would take more than all existing institutions could furnish. I give the case here, not in any hope that the thing can be done at once, but to show what a broad and bright road to independence in a new calling lies open to our country lasses, whenever they can find the teacher needed, in every village.

Here our thoughts are led to another great open field—our Workhouse infirmaries. I need only refer to the recent cases of unfortunates who have died of dirt and misery, for want of such nursing as they would have had in a well-managed hospital, to show what I mean. In our Poor-law Unions we have schools, we have sick and aged people, we have infirmaries, and we have funds which are to maintain all the inmates, educate the children, and comfort the helpless and suffering. For want of organizing these materials into one system, we too often see the children wasted and lost, the sufferers miserable, and the funds comparatively unproductive of good. It will be far otherwise when the guardians can obtain a trained nurse or two for each infirmary. Then the elder girls can be brought in from the school, and taught the art of nursing in such perpetual succession as must largely affect the destinies of workhouse-bred women. The workhouse origin will be no longer a fatal bar to industry and independence, when each Union infirmary has become a school of nursing. The demand for the services of the young women trained there will be as eager as it now is languid. There is every reason to suppose that the Poor-law Board will be ready and glad to sanction such an arrangement as this, thereby escaping for ever all danger of coroner's inquests on paupers who have died of bed-sores, or of inappropriate food. The Guardians can have but one feeling about it, everybody will think; for the material and moral economy and relief of such a method of managing the sick inmates must be to them as evident as it would be welcome. But they cannot take the first step, for want of the indispensable trained nurses who are not to be had.

The case is the same, whichever way we turn. Even in our hospitals there are none to spare; and everywhere else, the genuine skilled nurse is so scarce as to be contended for by the rich, and over-worked till she breaks down ultimately. At the same moment, wives, mothers and daughters are making the discovery that they do not know how to nurse. They had always supposed the thing would come of itself when wanted; but now we hear a new tone among them. They say they tremble to think of any grave illness happening to those most dear to them, for they do not know a single thing about the more critical stages of nursing. They have never witnessed long and severe illness; and they can only trust that, when the need arises, good sense and vigilant affection will teach them what to do. But the experienced demur to two things here said. Good sense and watchful affection, however combined with general domestic love and goodness, do not suffice to teach the best care of the sick; and again, to trust that they

will is not all that can be done beforehand. Why do not these wives, mothers and daughters set to work at once and learn the art? There are a hundred details which I need not indicate here which can be learned only by seeing the things done, by being regularly taught, and by actual practice. Why do not people learn them in the proper way? Because it is so difficult to find a teacher, and a place to learn in. Again we are landed in the same difficulty; and private homes are anxious and troubled because there are no schools of nursing accessible, through the deficiency of skilled trainers in the art.

Then there are the Colonies, and yet more, all India, with its hundreds of millions of inhabitants, all constantly liable to death from induced disease, and every species of bad nursing. India and the Colonies would afford a career of honour and profit to more Englishwomen than are now in want of employment and an income. We have heard a great deal of the disproportion of the sexes in many of the colonies, and of the consequent mischief to the comfort, and the morals and manners of the settlers; and of course everybody feels what a good thing it would be if poor and dependent young women at home could be the wives of the involuntary bachelors at the antipodes; but the repugnance general among us to sending out shiploads of young women as candidates for marriage, while pretending to go with other objects, has prevented any such extensive deportation as was taken for granted, as the next step, by persons of hardy sensibilities. In the midst of all this comes in the demand for nurses, quite apart from the bachelor question.

We know, by a published letter from Sydney, that, for want of duly qualified monthly nurses, improper persons engross that lucrative employment, to the serious peril of mother and infant, and sometimes even of the reputation of the house. It is rare luck to obtain a fit nurse on such terms as from 10*l.* to 20*l.* for the month, "besides presents." A fortune may be got, we also hear, by any "sensible woman" who will go out to practise as the German and French women do so commonly and advantageously—in the small way, which is as much nursing as surgery, and does not interfere with the doctors—in managing leeches, blisters, vaccination, cupping, slight wounds and sprains, &c. Such practitioners would be "exceedingly well paid" in the colonies where the medical men are sorely overworked.

All this, however, constitutes a very slight demand in comparison with that which is created wherever sanitary reform is introduced, as it now is into India. Now that hospitals in India are to be worthy of their name, and of the associations we have with it, the requisitions are so vast that it may be more prudent not to state them. The demand for midwifery nurses for the dépôts of the soldiers' wives could not be met, if this were all. But there are the three Presidential Commissions, charged with the care of the public health: and they will create new stations, new barracks and hospitals for soldiers and civilians, besides the vast things they have to do for the health of natives. If we could send out thousands of skilled nurses every year, they would all be wanted, for many years to

come. Of course, we can do nothing of the sort. But there is one thing that we can do, if the rightly-endowed women can be found. We can create a sort of "covenanted service" of nurses *in India, for India*. We can (surely this must be feasible!) send out—not troops of nurses in shiploads, who would be wanted at home if they were in existence—but a band of matrons and head nurses, qualified for their responsibilities and worthy of them, who should train women already on the spot, whether European or native. Among the soldiers' relatives, those of officials, those of the settlers, and the girls of the schools, there must be more young women ready to be learners and pupil-nurses than can be taught by any force of instructors that we are likely to send out for years to come; and now is the time for women of enterprise, of benevolence, and of an independent spirit, to make a grand use of the best years of their lives, to undertake the most splendid service ever offered to the head, hands, and hearts of women, and achieve an independence in a sure and speedy way, whether they care more or less for that object by itself.

The case of our poor unemployed or overworked countrywomen does appear as astonishing as it is painful, when the particulars of the demands for the most womanly of Woman's work are passed under such a review as we have now made. All reasons or excuses yet offered are trifling, or will presently become so, in face of such a demand as exists for nurses. Inconsiderate ladies, who would overwork the nurse, will soon lose the opportunity by being left in the lurch. Institutions which would under-pay the nurses will soon be left in the lurch also, unless they pay as private employers are willing to do. I believe the truth to be that, as I said at the outset, the cause of the anomaly is ignorance on the part of society generally, and of poor ladies and working women in particular. If this is true, the duty of all of us is plain enough. We must put an end to this ignorance; we must place the case of working women in their own hands, by supplying them with facts, and helping them to put their knowledge to use. Most of us have more or less to do with the poor children in the schools of our town, or village, or Union; and some of us may chance to know some educated woman of sense and spirit, with health and activity and no money; and such an one may be happy and fortunate in a post of authority and influence, like that of matron or superintendent of a hospital, Home, school, or workhouse infirmary, or of a Training Institution in old India, or in some rising colony. These, and all the gradations of women between the two, should at least hear from us what their chances in life really are. When we have told them, and shown them the evidence of what remains to be done, we shall have fewer paupers on our hands whom we have not the heart to put into the workhouse; and there will be fewer inquests on patients who need not have sunk; and there will be a relief to us all from the horror and grief of knowing, as we know now, that men are dying by thousands yearly for want of that nursing which women are pining and dying because they cannot give.

Algiers, 1865.

January 28th.

The invalid in search of a place of refuge from our English winter, or the tourist in quest of novelty, will do well to take his passage from Marseilles in one of the excellent steamers of the *Messageries Impériales*, and pass a few weeks at Algiers.

The one will find, after the middle of December, when the rainy season is usually over, genial sunshine and a climate where the thermometer rarely falls below sixty ; and the other, if he can dispense with the social attractions of Rome or Naples, may amuse himself with the aspect of a town still half Oriental in its population and habits, and in making excursions to many scenes of interest which are thickly scattered over a very beautiful country. Both may be comfortably lodged in the Hôtel de l'Orient, a new hotel lately established in the first division of an Algerian Rue de Rivoli, which has been commenced upon the partly finished Boulevard de l'Impératrice, fronted by the harbour, the bay, and the snowy peaks of Atlas, instead of the gardens of the Tuilleries.

Hitherto, one of the chief discouragements to foreign visitors has been the scanty supply and indifferent quality of hotel accommodation at Algiers—the old inns, in situation, cookery, and service being very like those of Leghorn, from which the stranger is always so glad to escape. But as building is going on here with almost Parisian activity, it is to be hoped that the rest of the trade will soon be willing to follow the fair example set to them by M. Marius of the New Hotel Company.

The aspect of Algiers from the sea has been the subject of so many similitudes, that a list of them would fill a volume. It has been compared to a lion crouching on a headland, with his head towards the shore ; to a swan shaking out its feathers in the sun ; to a sail spread out to dry ; and to an open quarry of white marble. It is, in fact, a white Moorish town, hanging on the side of a hill, fronted by a long European quarter of French architecture, and backed by picturesque heights, at this season brilliantly green. To this French frontage, Sir Morton Peto is engaged in adding a new face or boulevard, nearly a mile in length, following the bend of the harbour and resting on vaults, some of them fifty or sixty feet high. It is said that his bargain with the Government is, to do the entire work at his own cost, his payment being possession for ninety-nine years of the vaults and the building ground on the land side of his boulevard. The vaults, with their arches open to the harbour,

are, at the points where they are deepest, divided into three or four stories, and a considerable number are already let and occupied as stores and shops.

The Place du Gouvernement, from which this boulevard branches, was built by the French, soon after the occupation in 1830, on the site of demolished streets. Open on the side of the sea, it commands a noble view of the bay, and it is adorned by a few fine palm-trees and by an equestrian statue of the Duke of Orleans, so indifferent as to justify the Emperor in having sent it into exile out of the court of the Louvre. The Moorish quarter of the town climbs the hill behind with its steep narrow streets and stairs; but broad cross-streets are projected and partly commenced, and, in a few years, very little of it will be left. All the houses, great and small, are built on one plan, round a central court, which is often supported on no more than four columns, and is only eight or ten feet square. The doors are sometimes approached by a descent of half-a-dozen steps—sometimes they are placed three feet up in the wall, with a small block of stone to enable those to enter who find a single step of thirty-six inches a feat beyond their agility. The only external ornaments of the architecture are the doorways, which are occasionally of marble, neatly sculptured.

The palace of the Bishop is the best existing example of a handsome Moorish house. The court and its galleries, supported on twisted columns of white marble, are paved and wainscoted with tiles, which, however, appear to be of the indifferent modern manufacture of Valencia or Naples. The cedar balustrades and the doors are grand specimens of intricate Oriental latticework and panelling; the beams and the ceilings are richly carved and painted, and the plaster-work recalls that of the Alhambra, in its elaborate variety of design. In spite of its antique air, I believe the building is not older than the present century; and I am told that the marble columns and pavement employed in its construction and in that of most other luxurious Algerine dwellings, were wrought in Italy. The palace of the Governor-General is a somewhat larger house of the same kind, but not so well preserved, and considerably disfigured by incongruous additions by a French architect. It is said to be insufficient in accommodation, and a new official residence for the Governor is about to be built on Sir Morton Peto's new boulevard. Both the Bishop and the Governor have country-houses: the one on the south and the other on the north side of the town; and the Bishop resides constantly at his villa, only using his Moorish palace for his public receptions.

Society here is probably much the same as in the provincial capitals of France; consisting chiefly of civil and military officials and their families, with a thin sprinkling of the commercial class, and on public occasions a dash of the native element. The Governor-General, Marshal MacMahon, and Madame la Maréchale, are hospitable and popular. They have issued cards for two great balls, one of which has already taken

place, and they hold smaller receptions (with dancing) every Monday. The central court of the palace, pavilioned for the occasion with flags, and adorned with flowers, forms a very effective ball-room ; and the Empire, with its fondness for show and glitter, and all that the democracy, which it affects to represent, affects to despise, takes care that Imperial ball-rooms shall be well furnished with gay costumes. Besides the polychromatic soldiers, I counted half-a-dozen civil uniforms : blue and silver, blue and gold in various styles, blue and red, and black velvet with black lace. The Marshal did not wear the cuirass of gold embroidery which usually denotes his rank, but the plain blue coat of a general officer, with the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour. A good many native gentlemen, most of them in the snow-white berrous of Barbary, and black turban, sat on the sofa, or leaned against the columns. Many of them wore a bit of red ribbon on their white drapery, or a star indicative of one or the other grade in the same Legion. The salary of the Governor-General of Algeria seems to be hardly on a scale equal to that of the other great posts of the empire, being only 125,000 francs a year ; and of a fifth part of that sum the present tenant is mulcted, in order to provide a pension for the widow of his predecessor, Marshal Pelissier. Perhaps there may be various other allowances attached to the office ; but 4,000/- a year is not a large sum to support viceroyalty in a colony where everything but the necessities of life must come from Europe, and where everything that comes from Europe is dear.

A ball given by the mayor a few nights ago afforded me an opportunity of seeing something of the *bourgeoisie* of Algiers, of a class beneath that which is admitted to the more aristocratic gatherings at Government House.

The Hôtel de Ville, where it took place, is a purely modern building, in the French style, with a small inner court, filled with orange and banana trees. The rooms are convenient and commonplace. In addition to the usual stream of uniforms and crinolines which flowed past the mayoress, there was a considerable number of reverend *cadis*, who administer Mussulman justice amongst the natives, in their gigantic turbans of snow-white lawn, or rich cachemire. One end of the ball-room was filled with a bevy of Jewesses, some in French costume, and the rest—perhaps a dozen, in their ancient attire : usually a high-waisted gown of some rich embroidered stuff—though one of the dark-eyed dames wore crimson trimmed with white—a scarf, and a singularly ungraceful head-dress, consisting of a close black cap, or kerchief, bound tight round the skull, surmounted by a smaller cap, worn at the back of the head, covered with gold coins. In spite of their fine eyes, the effect produced by these ladies was not pleasing ; their foreheads being generally narrow and mean, their complexion sallow, and their mouths large and coarse.

Algiers is provided with a spacious and handsome theatre, but the company, though it receives a considerable contribution from the State, does

not succeed in obtaining the patronage of the public, the house being seldom half full. Most of the inhabitants seem to prefer enjoying the cool of the evening, between seven and ten o'clock, in the Place du Gouvernement, where the ladies gossip and the men smoke beneath the gas-lit palm-trees.

The beautiful hills and shores round Algiers are traversed in all directions by excellent roads, between which run many pretty shady lanes and byways, affording charming rides and walks. Tolerable saddle-horses may be hired for five francs a day, and an open carriage with a pair of horses costs two francs an hour. Omnibuses ply on all the roads, and one of the features of Algiers is a stand of these huge vehicles, on which sometimes twenty or thirty may be seen at once in front of the theatre. An omnibus may be hired at the same rate as an ordinary calèche, which must be a convenience and an economy to the full-quivered paterfamilias.

The *Jardin d'Essai*, about five kilometres to the south of the town, is one of the most interesting objects in the vicinity. It lies on both sides of the high-road, stretching on one side down to the sea, and on the other, to the crest of the hill which runs parallel to the shore; and the lower portion is historically interesting as the site where Charles V. landed in 1541, and whence, three days later, the shattered remains of his fleet carried off the shattered remains of his army. The principal features of the garden are two thriving avenues, each about half-a-mile long, the one of platanus and the other of palm, and these are intersected by a narrow alley of bamboos, delightful in its soft whispers and deep umbrage. Extensive nurseries of orange, citron, palm, and all sorts of trees suited to the climate of the colony, are traversed by agreeable walks, and varied by pens, in which ostriches and other large birds, and several varieties of the antelope, are bred with apparent success.

The upper garden commands from its walks, which are shaded by trees from all parts of the world, a noble view of Algiers and its bay. The extent of the whole is about forty hectares, or one hundred acres. Somewhat farther on, the road ascends to the crest of the hill, and reaches the village of Kouba, conspicuous by its high-domed church attached to a Jesuits' college still in progress of erection. Two buildings, consisting of spacious and airy corridors, have been reared right and left of the church, and appear to be already occupied by the fathers and their pupils. The mildness of the climate of Algiers may be estimated by the fact that these galleries are each open at the end to the external air, and are further ventilated above by unglazed openings. The northern side of the building affords one of the best views of Algiers; the eastern side, of a part of the great plain of the Metidja.

On the other, or north side of Algiers, there is also another ambitious ecclesiastical edifice, still incomplete, conspicuous on a lofty headland overhanging the sea—the church of Our Lady of Africa. It is in the Italian-Gothic style, with a tall dome and a semicircular-domed apse at

each of the ends. It is being built, I believe, by voluntary contributions collected by the Bishop. The work is discontinued for the winter, as the keeper gravely told me, one brilliant afternoon, with the thermometer standing about seventy-five in the shade, on account of the "*mauvais temps*."

The vicinity of Algiers abounds in country-houses, hung upon the heights looking to the sea, or nestling in the winding valleys behind them. The owners usually occupy them themselves during the summer, and let or try to let them to foreigners during the winter. Visited on a fine forenoon in January, they appear charming retreats; but during the rainy season, and what is called the cold season, those who have tried them as residences say they are apt to be damp. Communication with the town, for purposes of marketing and other business, is generally rendered easy by the omnibuses.

As a specimen Moorish villa, I went to the Château Didra, formerly a country-house belonging to a Dey, and now the property of an ex-milliner of Paris and London. It is situated on the extensive table-land to the south of the town, and is some eight or nine kilometres distant from it. The exterior presents the aspect of a square white-washed box of two stories, flanked by lower red-tiled buildings. Crossing an outer stable court, you enter one neatly paved with white marble, round which are built the kitchen and other offices, and from which a porch leads to the staircase of the principal mansion. This consists of the usual square court of two stories, with its double range of white columns and tiled galleries. Two or more rooms open from each gallery; and the only changes which appear to have been made in them since the Dey's time was the addition of here and there a fire-place in the European fashion. A good deal of the little furniture they contained—tables, bedsteads, and wardrobes—were of native workmanship, and rudely painted in bright colours, as also were the doors and other wooden fixtures. The views from the small windows on one side over the undulating table-land, and on the other over the plain of the Metidja and the ranges of Atlas, were charming; and the towered top of the house commanded a still more extensive prospect, as well as all the breezes of heaven. By an arrangement not in accordance with Frank habits, the dining-room was in the outer court, and could only be reached from the house proper by crossing the court from the porch. The sharp and civil landlady extolled her dwelling, as she no doubt used to magnify the delicate wares of her saleroom; demanding for leave to live in it the sum of one thousand francs per month; but likely to be tempted, as was privately hinted to me in the town, by a much smaller sum. The house is surrounded by a spacious walled garden and orange orchard; and the property, consisting of forty hectares, yields, as its mistress averred, the best oranges, grapes, milk, and cotton grown in Algeria. But it does not say much for the prosperity of the colony that a house which is quite a bijou in its way, and about one hundred acres of productive land, should have been purchased,

as I am told they were, only two or three years since, for no more than 1,500L.

A Trappist convent, about eleven miles from Algiers, formed the object of another interesting drive. Its site is on the first battle-field of the French, after their landing in 1830. In 1843, a grant of upwards of two thousand acres of land was given to the Trappists, and they pitched their humble tent near a graceful group of palms, which still adorns their outer court.

We were kept some little time waiting at the gate, because the brethren were in the refectory, and beguiled the time by looking at the chaplets of beads, medals, crucifixes, and other small articles, religious and secular, which the lay brother who received us was ready to sell for the benefit of the establishment. On the wall hung a MS. list of "Saintes Reliques," of which particles might also be purchased.

When we were at last led across the outer court, at the door of the court proper we were consigned to the care of another brother, who led us round the spacious, but very plain whitewashed cloister, and showed us the chapel, dormitories, library, and refectory. The chapel was very simple but of a large size, and the dormitories a series of small boxes placed in two rows in the centre of a large room, with spaces left round the walls as a passage. Of these boxes there might perhaps be one hundred. Each box contained a bedstead, with a coarse woollen cover, and we saw no other article of furniture, nor any ablutionary appliances. The library was a small room with two of its walls covered with bookcases. The books were chiefly religious, and looked as if they rarely left their shelves. In the lately vacated refectory the odour of garlic was overwhelming. A belated member of the confraternity was still at dinner. His repast seemed to consist of some kind of soup, a piece of bread, a lettuce, and an orange. We were then conducted through a large kitchen-garden, a thriving orange and citron orchard, and by a row of workshops back to the convent. In the parlour we were received by a superior father—the prior or sub-prior—who set before us a luncheon of bread and cheese and honey, oranges, dates, and raisins, Cape gooseberries, and some excellent red wine of 1864. A glass of remarkably fine sweet wine of the Frontignan grape concluded the repast, in which we were joined by a French officer and his friend, who had been enjoying a day's shooting on the lands of *La Trappe*. The garden of the convent and an exterior mulberry-plantation are surrounded by a substantial seven-feet wall, enclosing also barns and other offices, to which they are adding a very large storehouse for produce. The fraternity consists of about 130 members. A good many of them were pursuing various rustic employments; loading carts, making a stack of faggots, and driving teams of oxen. These monastic workmen wore their ordinary brown robes, which were laced up to their leather girdles by the thong and swivel which English ladies call a "page," and their heads were protected by large straw or felt hats.

As we drove along the high-road we met several of their carts, going to, and returning from a quarry, out of which their new storehouse was being built. On the whole, this abode of silence and labour wore an aspect of prosperity and successful industry of which the adjacent villages, such as Cleragas on the one side, and Guyotville on the other, are wholly destitute. The first is an inland agricultural village; the latter, intended for a colony of fishermen, is close to the sea-shore. The guide-book informs the inquiring tourist that Guyotville, which has been built about twenty years, was at first a failure; but that Government having come to its aid, and taken it into its own paternal hands, it is beginning to *sortir d'une situation pénible*. It is questionable whether its inhabitants would say as much; their cabins, built round three sides of a large square, being of the most forlorn description—some of them in ruins. I entered one of these poor cottages, which I found full of smoke and with little else in it. Its mistress, a Minorcan from Mahon—whose yellow child spoke of fever—told me that there was not a fisherman in the place, but that the population lived by their labour on the coast or by making charcoal.

Returning to the town, the museum of the products of the colony deserves honourable mention. Besides stuffed birds and beasts, there are fine specimens of the various woods and marbles of Algeria. Amongst the former, the cedar of Lebanon appears to attain the greatest size—and the *Thuja articulata*—the indestructible *alerce* of Spain, of which the fine old Moorish doors and ceilings still existing at Seville, Cordova, and Granada, are chiefly made—seems the most beautiful and valuable. It is of an extremely compact grain, of great weight, takes a most beautiful polish, and is said to retain its original colour without change. The colour varies in different specimens, from a dark walnut brown to a golden yellow, and the mottling is very rich and varied. Over the marbles, the Algerian onyx, which made so great a figure in the London Exhibition of 1862, reigns supreme. There is a curious assortment of coarse pottery from Kabylia, much of it very antique and good in form, and showing a rude taste for colour and ornament. The metal-work of Barbary, as exhibited in pitchers, coffee-pots, perfume-burners, trays, lamps, cups, bracelets, and brooches, is also well worth examination. In the women's ornaments there is a good deal of coral used in a very effective manner. Some of the textile manufactures, especially the carpets, are likewise attractive in their skilful combinations of colour.

There is also a small museum of Roman and Moorish antiquities, which is well worth a visit, for the sake of the handsome well-preserved Moorish house in which it is placed. Fragments of sculpture and mosaic, and a few inscriptions, form the principal part of the contents. Perhaps one of the most interesting objects is a plaster cast taken from the clay in which a Moorish Christian was buried alive in 1509, by order of Aluch Ali, the famous sultan and pacha of Algiers. The story is very circumstantially told by Diego Haedo, a Spanish historian, who

published a *Historia de Argal* in 1612, mainly compiled from notes taken down from the lips of redeemed captives. He says that Geronimo (that being the Moor's baptismal name) was placed alive in one of the forms in which the mud-blocks used in building were made; and he also indicates the side of the fort, called "The Fort of Twenty-four Hours," then in process of erection, in which the block with its human deposit was placed. The passage having attracted the notice of M. Verbruggen, keeper of the museum library, public attention was called to it in the local newspapers by that gentleman; and when, some years afterwards, in 1853, the fort was ordered to be pulled down, he took steps which led to the discovery of the skeleton. The remains of the martyr were transferred to the cathedral with much pomp, and they lie there beneath an inscription which proclaims him "venerable," waiting until miracles shall have entitled him to the higher epithet of "blessed;" after which it is probable that a new S. Geronimo will be added to the calendar.

The story, as related by Haedo, is in itself a very touching one; and the discovery of the bones in the very spot pointed out by his narrative goes far to prove its general correctness. While the devout hail with pious enthusiasm the recovery of these holy relics, all lovers of literature ought also to regard with satisfaction an incident which is certainly calculated to raise the credit of the chronicler, whose book is now principally valuable for the account which it contains of the captivity of Cervantes at Algiers.

K.



Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. GIBSON'S LITTLE DINNER.



LL this had taken place before Roger's first meeting with Molly and Cynthia at Miss Brownings'; and the little dinner on the Friday at Mr. Gibson's, which followed in due sequence.

Mrs. Gibson intended the Hamleys to find this dinner pleasant; and they did. Mr. Gibson was fond of these two young men, both for their parents' sake and their own, for he had known them since boyhood; and to those whom he liked Mr. Gibson could be remarkably agreeable. Mrs. Gibson really gave them a welcome—and cordiality in a hostess is a very becoming mantle for any other deficiencies there may be. Cynthia and Molly looked their best, which was all the duty

Mrs. Gibson absolutely required of them, as she was willing enough to take her full share in the conversation. Osborne fell to her lot, of course, and for some time he and she prattled on with all the ease of manner and commonplaceness of meaning which go far to make the "art of polite conversation." Roger, who ought to have made himself agreeable to one or the other of the young ladies, was exceedingly interested in what Mr. Gibson was telling him of a paper on comparative osteology in some foreign journal of science, which Lord Hollingsford was in the habit of forwarding to his friend the country surgeon. Yet every now and then while he listened he caught his attention wandering to the face of Cynthia, who was placed between his brother and Mr. Gibson. She was not particularly occupied with attending to anything that was going on; her eyelids were carelessly dropped, as she crumpled her bread on the tablecloth, and her beautiful long eyelashes were seen on the clear tint of her oval cheek.



She was thinking of something else ; Molly was trying to understand with all her might. Suddenly Cynthia looked up, and caught Roger's gaze of intent admiration too fully for her to be unaware that he was staring at her. She coloured a little, but after the first moment of rosy confusion at his evident admiration of her, she flew to the attack, diverting his confusion at thus being caught, to the defence of himself from her accusation.

"It is quite true ! " she said to him. "I was not attending : you see I don't know even the A B C of science. But, please, don't look so severely at me, even if I am a dunce ! "

"I did not know—I did not mean to look severely, I am sure," replied he, not knowing well what to say.

"Cynthia is not a dunce either," said Mrs. Gibson, afraid lest her daughter's opinion of herself might be taken seriously. "But I have always observed that some people have a talent for one thing and some for another. Now Cynthia's talents are not for science and the severer studies. Do you remember, love, what trouble I had to teach you the use of the globes ? "

"Yes; and I don't know longitude from latitude now ; and I'm always puzzled as to which is perpendicular and which is horizontal."

"Yet, I do assure you," her mother continued, rather addressing herself to Osborne, "that her memory for poetry is prodigious. I have heard her repeat the 'Prisoner of Chillon' from beginning to end."

"It would be rather a bore to have to hear her, I think," said Mr. Gibson, smiling at Cynthia, who gave him back one of her bright looks of mutual understanding.

"Ah, Mr. Gibson, I have found out before now that you have no soul for poetry ; and Molly there is your own child. She reads such deep books—all about facts and figures : she'll be quite a blue-stocking by and by."

"Mamma," said Molly, reddening, "you think it was a deep book because there were the shapes of the different cells of bees in it ; but it was not at all deep. It was very interesting."

"Never mind, Molly," said Osborne. "I stand up for blue-stockings ! "

"And I object to the distinction implied in what you say," said Roger. "It was not deep, *ergo*, it was very interesting. Now, a book may be both deep and interesting."

"Oh, if you are going to chop logic and use Latin words, I think it is time for us to leave the room," said Mrs. Gibson.

"Don't let us run away as if we were beaten, mamma," said Cynthia. "Though it may be logic, I, for one, can understand what Mr. Roger Hamley said just now ; and I read some of Molly's book ; and whether it was deep or not I found it very interesting—more so than I should think the 'Prisoner of Chillon' now-a-days. I've displaced the Prisoner to make room for Johnnie Gilpin as my favourite poem."

"How could you talk such nonsense, Cynthia?" said Mrs. Gibson, as the girls followed her upstairs. "You know you are not a dunce. It is all very well not to be a blue-stocking, because gentle-people don't like that kind of woman; but ranning yourself down, and contradicting all I said about your liking for Byron, and poets and poetry—to Osborne Hamley of all men, too!"

Mrs. Gibson spoke quite crossly for her.

"But, mamma," Cynthia replied, "I am either a dunce, or I am not. If I am, I did right to own it; if I am not, he's a dunce if he doesn't find out I was joking."

"Well," said Mrs. Gibson, a little puzzled by this speech, and wanting some elucidatory addition.

"Only that if he's a dunce his opinion of me is worth nothing. So, any way, it doesn't signify."

"You really bewilder me with your nonsense, child. Molly is worth twenty of you."

"I quite agree with you, mamma," said Cynthia, turning round to take Molly's hand.

"Yes; but she ought not to be," said Mrs. Gibson, still irritated. "Think of the advantages you've had."

"I'm afraid I had rather be a dunce than a blue-stocking," said Molly; for the term had a little annoyed her, and the annoyance was rankling still.

"Hush; here they are coming: I hear the dining-room door! I never meant you were a blue-stocking, dear, so don't look vexed.—Cynthia, my love, where did you get those lovely flowers—anemones, are they? They suit your complexion so exactly."

"Come, Molly, don't look so grave and thoughtf^{ul}," exclaimed Cynthia. "Don't you perceive mamma wants us to be smiling and amiable?"

Mr. Gibson had had to go out to his evening round; and the young men were all too glad to come up into the pretty drawing-room; the bright little wood fire; the comfortable easy chairs which, with so small a party, might be drawn round the hearth; the good-natured hostess; the pretty, agreeable girls. Roger sauntered up to the corner where Cynthia was standing, playing with a hand-screen.

"There is a charity ball in Hollingsford soon, isn't there?" asked he.

"Yes; on Easter Tuesday," she replied.

"Are you going? I suppose you are?"

"Yes; mamma is going to take Molly and me."

"You will enjoy it very much—going together?"

For the first time during this little conversation she glanced up at him—real honest pleasure shining out of her eyes.

"Yes; going together will make the enjoyment of the thing. It would be dull without her."

"You are great friends, then?" he asked.

"I never thought I should like any one so much,—any girl I

She put in the final reservation in all simplicity of heart; and in all simplicity did he understand it. He came ever so little nearer, and dropped his voice a little.

"I was so anxious to know. I am so glad. I have often wondered how you two were getting on."

"Have you?" said she, looking up again. "At Cambridge? You must be very fond of Molly!"

"Yes, I am. She was with us so long; and at such a time! I look upon her almost as a sister."

"And she is very fond of all of you. I seem to know you all from hearing her talk about you so much."

"All of you!" said she, laying an emphasis on 'all' to show that it included the dead as well as the living. Roger was silent for a minute or two.

"I didn't know you, even by hearsay. So you mustn't wonder that I was a little afraid. But as soon as I saw you, I knew how it must be; and it was such a relief!"

"Cynthia," said Mrs. Gibson, who thought that the younger son had had quite his share of low, confidential conversation, "come here, and sing that little French ballad to Mr. Osborne Hamley."

"Which do you mean, mamma? 'Tu t'en repentiras, Colin?'"

"Yes; such a pretty, playful little warning to young men," said Mrs. Gibson, smiling up at Osborne. "The refrain is—

Tu t'en repentiras, Colin,
Tu t'en repentiras,
Car si tu prends une femme, Colin,
Tu t'en repentiras.

The advice may apply very well when there is a French wife in the case; but not, I am sure, to an Englishman who is thinking of an English wife."

This choice of a song was exceedingly *mal-àpropos*, had Mrs. Gibson but known it. Osborne and Roger knowing that the wife of the former was a Frenchwoman, and, conscious of each other's knowledge, felt doubly awkward; while Molly was as much confused as though she herself were secretly married. However, Cynthia caroled the saucy ditty out, and her mother smiled at it, in total ignorance of any application it might have. Osborne had instinctively gone to stand behind Cynthia, as she sat at the piano, so as to be ready to turn over the leaves of her music if she required it. He kept his hands in his pockets and his eyes fixed on her fingers; his countenance clouded with gravity at all the merry quips which she so playfully sang. Roger looked grave as well, but was much more at his ease than his brother; indeed, he was half-amused by the awkwardness of the situation. He caught Molly's troubled eyes and heightened colour, and he saw that she was feeling this *contretemps* more seriously than she needed to do. He moved to a seat by her, and half whispered, "Too late a warning, is it not?"

Molly looked up at him as he leant towards her, and replied in the same tone—"Oh, I am so sorry!"

"You need not be. He won't mind it long; and a man must take the consequences when he puts himself in a false position."

Molly could not tell what to reply to this, so she hung her head and kept silence. Yet she could see that Roger did not change his attitude or remove his hand from the back of his chair, and, impelled by curiosity to find out the cause of his stillness, she looked up at him at length, and saw his gaze fixed on the two who were near the piano. Osborne was saying something eagerly to Cynthia, whose grave eyes were upturned to him with soft intentness of expression, and her pretty mouth half-open, with a sort of impatience for him to cease speaking, that she might reply.

"They are talking about France," said Roger, in answer to Molly's unspoken question. "Osborne knows it well, and Miss Kirkpatrick has been at school there, you know. It sounds very interesting; shall we go nearer and hear what they are saying?"

It was all very well to ask this civilly, but Molly thought it would have been better to wait for her answer. Instead of waiting, however, Roger went to the piano, and, leaning on it, appeared to join in the light merry talk, while he feasted his eyes as much as he dared by looking at Cynthia. Molly suddenly felt as if she could scarcely keep from crying—a minute ago he had been so near to her, and talking so pleasantly and confidentially; and now he almost seemed as if he had forgotten her existed. She thought that all this was wrong; and she exaggerated its wrongness to herself; "mean," and "envious of Cynthia," and "ill-natured," and "selfish," were the terms she kept applying to herself, but it did no good, she was just as naughty at the last as at the first.

Mrs. Gibson broke into the state of things which Molly thought was to endure for ever. Her work had been intricate up to this time, and had required a great deal of counting; so she had had no time to attend to her duties, one of which she always took to be to show herself to the world as an impartial stepmother. Cynthia had played and sung, and now she must give Molly her turn of exhibition. Cynthia's singing and playing was light and graceful, but anything but correct; but she herself was so charming, that it was only fanatics for music who cared for false chords and omitted notes. Molly, on the contrary, had an excellent ear, if she had ever been well taught; and both from inclination and conscientious perseverance of disposition, she would go over an incorrect passage for twenty times. But she was very shy of playing in company; and when forced to do it, she went through her performance heavily, and hated her handiwork more than any one.

"Now, you must play a little, Molly," said Mrs. Gibson; "play us that beautiful piece of Kalkbrenner's, my dear."

Molly looked up at her stepmother with beseeching eyes; but it only brought out another form of request, still more like a command.

"Go at once, my dear. You may not play it quite rightly; and I know you are very nervous; but you're quite amongst friends."

So there was a disturbance made in the little group at the piano, and Molly sat down to her martyrdom.

"Please, go away!" said she to Osborne, who was standing behind her ready to turn over. "I can quite well do it for myself. And oh! if you would but talk!"

Osborne remained where he was in spite of her appeal, and gave her what little approval she got; for Mrs. Gibson, exhausted by her previous labour of counting her stitches, fell asleep in her comfortable sofa-corner near the fire; and Roger, who began at first to talk a little in compliance with Molly's request, found his *sûte-à-tête* with Cynthia so agreeable, that Molly lost her place several times in trying to catch a sudden glimpse of Cynthia sitting at her work, and Roger by her, intent on catching her low replies to what he was saying.

"There, now I've done!" said Molly, standing up quickly as soon as she had finished the eighteen dreary pages; "and I think I will never sit down to play again!"

Osborne laughed at her vehemence. Cynthia began to take some part in what was being said, and thus made the conversation general. Mrs. Gibson wakened up gracefully, as was her way of doing all things, and slid into the subjects they were talking about so easily, that she almost succeeded in making them believe she had never been asleep at all.



CHAPTER XXV.

HOLLINGFORD IN A BUSTLE.

ALL Hollingsford felt as if there was a great deal to be done before Easter this year. There was Easter proper, which always required new clothing of some kind, for fear of certain consequences from little birds, who were supposed to resent the impiety of those who do not wear some new article of dress on Easter-day. And most ladies considered it wiser that the little birds should see the new article for themselves, and not have to take it upon trust, as they would have to do if it were merely a pocket-handkerchief, or a petticoat, or any article of under-clothing. So piety demanded a new bonnet, or a new gown; and was barely satisfied with an Easter pair of gloves. Miss Rose was generally very busy just before Easter in Hollingsford. Then this year there was the charity ball. Ashcombe, Hollingsford, and Coreham were three neighbouring towns, of about the same number of population, lying at the three equidistant corners of a triangle. In imitation of greater cities with their festivals, these three towns had agreed to have an annual ball for the benefit of the county hospital to be held in turn at each place; and Hollingsford was to be the place this year.

It was a fine time for hospitality, and every house of any pretension was as full as it could hold, and flies were engaged long months before.

If Mrs. Gibson could have asked Osborne, or in default, Roger Hamley to go to the ball with them and to sleep at their house,—or if, indeed, she could have picked up any stray scion of a “county family” to whom such an offer would have been a convenience, she would have restored her own dressing-room to its former use as the spare-room, with pleasure. But she did not think it was worth her while to put herself out for any of the humdrum and ill-dressed women who had been her former acquaintance at Ashcombe. For Mr. Preston it might have been worth while to give up her room, considering him in the light of a handsome and prosperous young man, and a good dancer besides. But there were more lights in which he was to be viewed. Mr. Gibson, who really wanted to return the hospitality shown to him by Mr. Preston at the time of his marriage, had yet an instinctive distaste to the man, which no wish of freeing himself from obligation, nor even the more worthy feeling of hospitality, could overcome. Mrs. Gibson had some old grudges of her own against him, but she was not one to retain angry feelings, or be very active in her retaliation ; she was afraid of Mr. Preston, and admired him at the same time. It was awkward too—so she said—to go into a ball-room without any gentleman at all, and Mr. Gibson was so uncertain ! On the whole—partly for this last-given reason, and partly because conciliation was the best policy, Mrs. Gibson was slightly in favour of inviting Mr. Preston to be their guest. But as soon as Cynthia heard the question discussed—or rather, as soon as she heard it discussed in Mr. Gibson’s absence, she said that if Mr. Preston came to be their visitor on the occasion, she for one would not go to the ball at all. She did not speak with vehemence or in anger ; but with such quiet resolution that Molly looked up in surprise. She saw that Cynthia was keeping her eyes fixed on her work, and that she had no intention of meeting any one’s gaze, or giving any further explanation. Mrs. Gibson, too, looked perplexed, and once or twice seemed on the point of asking some question ; but she was not angry as Molly had fully expected. She watched Cynthia furtively and in silence for a minute or two, and then said that after all she could not conveniently give up her dressing-room ; and altogether, they had better say no more about it. So no stranger was invited to stay at Mr. Gibson’s at the time of the ball ; but Mrs. Gibson openly spoke of her regret at the unavoidable inhospitality, and hoped that they might be able to build an addition to their house before the triennial Hollingsford ball.

Another cause of unusual bustle at Hollingsford this Easter was the expected return of the family to the Towers, after their unusually long absence. Mr. Sheepbanks might be seen trotting up and down on his stout, old cob, speaking to attentive masons, plasterers, and glaziers about putting everything—on the outside at least—about the cottages belonging

to "my lord," in perfect repair. Lord Cumnor owned the greater part of the town ; and those who lived under other landlords, or in houses of their own, were stirred up by the dread of contrast to do up their dwellings. So the ladders of whitewashers and painters were sadly in the way of the ladies tripping daintily along to make their purchases, and holding their gowns up in a bunch behind, after a fashion quite gone out in these days. The housekeeper and steward from the Towers might also be seen coming in to give orders at the various shops ; and stopping here and there at those kept by favourites, to avail themselves of the eagerly-tendered refreshments.

Lady Harriet came to call on her old governess the day after the arrival of the family at the Towers. Molly and Cynthia were out walking when she came—doing some errands for Mrs. Gibson, who had a secret idea that Lady Harriet would call at the particular time she did, and had a not uncommon wish to talk to her ladyship without the corrective presence of any member of her own family.

Mrs. Gibson did not give Molly the message of remembrance that Lady Harriet had left for her ; but she imparted various pieces of news relating to the Towers with great animation and interest. The Duchess of Menteith and her daughter, Lady Alice, were coming to the Towers ; would be there the day of the ball ; would come to the ball ; and the Menteith diamonds were famous. That was piece of news the first. The second was that ever so many gentlemen were coming to the Towers—some English, some French. This piece of news would have come first in order of importance had there been much probability of their being dancing men, and, as such, possible partners at the coming ball. But Lady Harriet had spoken of them as Lord Hollingsford's friends, useless scientific men in all probability. Then, finally, Mrs. Gibson was to go to the Towers next day to lunch ; Lady Cumnor had written a little note by Lady Harriet to beg her to come ; if Mrs. Gibson could manage to find her way to the Towers, one of the carriages in use should bring her back to her own home in the course of the afternoon.

"The dear countess!" said Mrs. Gibson, with soft affection. It was a soliloquy, uttered after a minute's pause, at the end of all this information.

And all the rest of that day her conversation had an aristocratic perfume hanging about it. One of the few books she had brought with her into Mr. Gibson's house was bound in pink, and in it she studied "Menteith, Duke of, Adolphus George," &c. &c., till she was fully up in all the duchess's connections, and probable interests. Mr. Gibson made his mouth up into a droll whistle when he came home at night, and found himself in a Towers' atmosphere. Molly saw the shade of annoyance through the drollery ; she was beginning to see it oftener than she liked, not that she reasoned upon it, or that she consciously traced the annoyance to its source ; but she could not help feeling uneasy in herself when she knew her father was in the least put out.

Of course a fly was ordered for Mrs. Gibson. In the early afternoon she came home. If she had been disappointed in her interview with the countess she never told her woe, nor revealed the fact that when she first arrived at the Towers she had to wait for an hour in Lady Cumnor's morning-room, uncheered by any companionship save that of her old friend Mrs. Bradley, till suddenly, Lady Harriet coming in, she exclaimed, "Why, Clare ! you dear woman ! are you here all alone ? Does mamma know ?" And, after a little more affectionate conversation, she rushed to find her ladyship, perfectly aware of the fact, but too deep in giving the duchess the benefit of her wisdom and experience in trousseaux to be at all aware of the length of time Mrs. Gibson had been passing in patient solitude. At lunch Mrs. Gibson was secretly hurt by my lord's supposing it to be her dinner, and calling out his urgent hospitality from the very bottom of the table, giving as a reason for it, that she must remember it was her dinner. In vain she piped out in her soft, high voice, "Oh, my lord ! I never eat meat in the middle of the day ; I can hardly eat anything at lunch." Her voice was lost, and the duchess might go away with the idea that the Hollingsford doctor's wife dined early ; that is to say, if her grace ever condescended to have any idea on the subject at all ; which presupposes that she was cognizant of the fact of there being a doctor at Hollingsford, and that he had a wife, and that his wife was the pretty, faded, elegant-looking woman sending away her plate of untasted food—food that she longed to eat, for she was really desperately hungry after her drive and her solitude.

And then, after lunch, there did come a tête-à-tête with Lady Cumnor, which was conducted after this wise :—

"Well, Clare ! I am really glad to see you. I once thought I should never get back to the Towers, but here I am ! There was such a clever man at Bath—a Doctor Snape—he cured me at last—quite set me up. I really think if ever I am ill again I shall send for him : it is such a thing to find a really clever medical man. Oh, by the way, I always forget you've married Mr. Gibson—of course he is very clever, and all that. (The carriage to the door in ten minutes, Brown, and desire Bradley to bring my things down.) What was I asking you ? Oh ! how do you get on with the step-daughter. She seemed to me to be a young lady with a pretty stubborn will of her own. I put a letter for the post down somewhere, and I cannot think where ; do help me to look for it, there's a good woman. Just run to my room, and see if Brown can find it, for it is of great consequence."

Off went Mrs. Gibson rather unwillingly ; for there were several things she had wanted to speak about, and she had not heard half of what she had expected to learn of the family gossip. But all chance was gone ; for when she came back from her fruitless errand, Lady Cumnor and the duchess were in full talk, Lady Cumnor with the missing letter in her hand, which she was using something like a baton to enforce her words.

"Every iota from Paris ! Every i-o-ta !"

Lady Cumnor was too much of a lady not to apologize for useless trouble, but they were nearly the last words she spoke to Mrs. Gibson, for she had to go out and drive with the duchess; and the brougham to take "Clare" (as she persisted in calling Mrs. Gibson) back to Hollingford, followed the carriage to the door. Lady Harriet came away from her entourage of young men and young ladies all prepared for some walking expedition to wish Mrs. Gibson good-by.

"We shall see you at the ball," she said. "You'll be there with your two girls, of course, and I must have a little talk with you there; with all these visitors in the house, it has been impossible to see anything of you to-day, you know."

Such were the facts, but rose-colour was the medium through which they were seen by Mrs. Gibson's household listeners on her return.

"There are many visitors staying at the Towers—oh, yes! a great many: the duchess and Lady Alice, and Mr. and Mrs. Grey, and Lord Albert Monson and his sister, and my o'd friend Captain James of the Blues—many more, in fact. But of course I preferred going to Lady Cumnor's own room, where I could see her and Lady Harriet quietly, and where we were not disturbed by the bustle downstairs. Of course we were obliged to go down to lunch, and then I saw my old friends, and a newed pleasant acquaintances. But I really could hardly get any connected conversation with any one. Lord Cumnor seemed so delighted to see me there again: though there were six or seven between us, he was always interrupting with some civil or kind speech especially addressed to me. And after lunch Lady Cumnor asked me all sorts of questions about my new life with as much interest as if I had been her daughter. To be sure, when the duchess came in we had to leave off, and talk about the trousseau she is preparing for Lady Alice. Lady Harriet made such a point of our meeting at the ball: she is such a good, affectionate creature, is Lady Harriet!"

This last was said in a tone of meditative appreciation.

The afternoon of the day on which the ball was to take place, a servant rode over from Hamley with two lovely nosegays, "with the Mr. Hamleys' compliments to Miss Gibson and Miss Kirkpatrick." Cynthia was the first to receive them. She came dancing into the drawing-room, flourishing the flowers about in either hand, and danced up to Molly, who was trying to settle to her reading, by way of passing the time away till the evening came.

"Look, Molly, look! Here are bouquets for us! Long life to the givers!"

"Who are they from?" asked Molly, taking hold of one, and examining it with tender delight at its beauty.

"Who from? Why, the two paragons of Hamleys, to be sure! Is it not a pretty attention?"

"How kind of them!" said Molly.

"I'm sure it is Osborne who thought of it. He has been so much

abroad, where it is such a common compliment to send bouquets to young ladies."

"I don't see why you should think it is Osborne's thought!" said Molly, reddening a little. "Mr. Roger Hamley used to gather nosegays constantly for his mother, and sometimes for me."

"Well, never mind whose thought it was, or who gathered them; we've got the flowers, and that's enough. Molly, I'm sure these red flowers will just match your coral necklace and bracelets," said Cynthia, pulling out some camellias, then a rare kind of flower.

"Oh, please, don't!" exclaimed Molly. "Don't you see how carefully the colours are arranged—they have taken such pains; please, don't."

"Nonsense!" said Cynthia, continuing to pull them out; "see, here are quite enough. I'll make you a little coronet of them—sewn on black velvet, which will never be seen—just as they do in France!"

"Oh, I am so sorry! It is quite spoilt," said Molly.

"Never mind! I'll take this spoilt bouquet; I can make it up again just as prettily as ever; and you shall have this, which has never been touched." Cynthia went on arranging the crimson buds and flowers to her taste. Molly said nothing, but kept on watching Cynthia's nimble fingers tying up the wreath.

"There," said Cynthia, at last, "when that is sewn on black velvet, to keep the flowers from dying, you'll see how pretty it will look. And there are enough red flowers in this untouched nosegay to carry out the idea!"

"Thank you" (very slowly). "But shan't you mind having only the wrecks of the other?"

"Not I; red flowers would not go with my pink dress."

"But—I daresay they arranged each nosegay so carefully!"

"Perhaps they did. But I never would allow sentiment to interfere with my choice of colours; and pink does tie one down. Now you, in white muslin, just tipped with crimson, like a daisy, may wear anything."

Cynthia took the utmost pains in dressing Molly, leaving the clever housemaid to her mother's exclusive service. Mrs. Gibson was more anxious about her attire than was either of the girls; it had given her occasion for deep thought and not a few sighs. Her deliberation had ended in her wearing her pearl-grey satin wedding-gown, with a profusion of lace, and white and coloured lilacs. Cynthia was the one who took the affair the most lightly. Molly looked upon the ceremony of dressing for a first ball as rather a serious ceremony; certainly as an anxious proceeding. Cynthia was almost as anxious as herself; only Molly wanted her appearance to be correct and unnoticed; and Cynthia was desirous of setting off Molly's rather peculiar charms—her cream-coloured skin, her profusion of curly black hair, her beautiful long-shaped eyes, with their shy, loving expression. Cynthia took up so much time in dressing Molly

to her mind, that she herself had to perform her toilette in a hurry. Molly, ready dressed, sate on a low chair in Cynthia's room, watching the pretty creature's rapid movements, as she stood in her petticoat before the glass, doing up her hair, with quick certainty of effect. At length, Molly heaved a long sigh, and said,—

“ I should like to be pretty ! ”

“ Why, Molly,” said Cynthia, turning round with an exclamation on the tip of her tongue; but when she caught the innocent, wistful look on Molly's face, she instinctively checked what she was going to say, and, half-smiling to her own reflection in the glass, she said,—“ The French girls would tell you to believe that you were pretty would make you so.”

Molly paused before replying,—

“ I suppose they would mean that if you knew you were pretty, you would never think about your looks; you would be so certain of being liked, and that it is caring——”

“ Listen! that's eight o'clock striking. Don't trouble yourself with trying to interpret a French girl's meaning, but help me on with my frock, there's a dear one.”

The two girls were dressed, and were standing over the fire waiting for the carriage in Cynthia's room, when Maria (Betty's successor) came hurrying into the room. Maria had been officiating as maid to Mrs Gibson, but she had had intervals of leisure, in which she had rushed upstairs, and, under the pretence of offering her services, she had seen the young ladies' dresses, and the sight of so many nice clothes had sent her into a state of excitement which made her think nothing of rushing upstairs for the twentieth time, with a nosegay still more beautiful than the two previous ones.

“ Here, Miss Kirkpatrick! No, it's not for you, miss!” as Molly, being nearer to the door, offered to take it and pass it to Cynthia.

“ It's for Miss Kirkpatrick; and there's a note for her besides!”

Cynthia said nothing, but took the note and the flowers. She held the note so that Molly could read it at the same time she did.

I send you some flowers; and you must allow me to claim the first dance after nine o'clock, before which time I fear I cannot arrive.—C. P.

“ Who is it? ” asked Molly.

Cynthia looked extremely irritated, indignant, perplexed—what was it turned her cheek so pale, and made her eyes so full of fire?

“ It is Mr. Preston,” said she, in answer to Molly. “ I shall not dance with him; and here go his flowers——”

Into the very middle of the embers, which she immediately stirred down upon the beautiful shining petals as if she wished to annihilate them as soon as possible. Her voice had never been raised; it was as sweet as usual; nor, though her movements were prompt enough, were they hasty or violent.

"Oh!" said Molly, "those beautiful flowers! We might have put them in water."

"No," said Cynthia; "it's best to destroy them. We don't want them; and I can't bear to be reminded of that man."

"It was an impertinent familiar note," said Molly. "What right had he to express himself in that way—no beginning, no end, and only initials. Did you know him well when you were at Ashcombe, Cynthia?"

"Oh, don't let us think any more about him," replied Cynthia. "It is quite enough to spoil any pleasure at the ball to think that he will be there. But I hope I shall get engaged before he comes, so that I can't dance with him—and don't you, either!"

"There! they are calling for us," exclaimed Molly, and with quick step, yet careful of their draperies, they made their way downstairs to the place where Mr. and Mrs. Gibson awaited them. Yes: Mr. Gibson was going; even if he had to leave them afterwards to attend to any professional call. And Molly suddenly began to admire her father as a handsome man, when she saw him now, in full evening attire. Mrs. Gibson, too—how pretty she was! In short, it was true that no better-looking a party than these four people entered the Hollingsford ball-room that evening.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CHARITY BALL.

At the present time there are few people at a public ball besides the danoers and their chaperones, or relations in some degree interested in them. But in the days when Molly and Cynthia were young—before railroads were, and before their consequences, the excursion-trains, which take every one up to London now-a-days, there to see their fill of gay crowds and fine dresses—to go to an annual charity-ball, even though all thought of dancing had passed by years ago, and without any of the responsibilities of a chaperone, was a very allowable and favourite piece of dissipation to all the kindly old maids who thronged the country towns of England. They aired their old lace and their best dresses; they saw the aristocratic magnates of the country side; they gossipped with their coevals, and speculated on the romances of the young around them in a curious yet friendly spirit. The Miss Brownings would have thought themselves sadly defrauded of the gayest event of the year, if anything had prevented their attending the charity-ball, and Miss Browning would have been indignant, Miss Phoebe aggrieved, had they not been asked to Ashcombe and Corsham, by friends at each place, who had, like them, gone through the dancing stage of life some five-and-twenty years before, but who liked still to haunt the scenes of their former enjoyment, and see

a younger generation dance on "regardless of their doom." They had come in one of the two sedan-chairs that yet lingered in use at Hollingford ; such a night as this brought a regular harvest of gains to the two old men who, in what was called the "town's livery," trotted backwards and forwards with their many loads of ladies and finery. There were some postchaises, and some "flys," but after mature deliberation Miss Browning had decided to keep to the more comfortable custom of the sedan-chair ; "which," as she said to Miss Piper, one of her visitors, "came into the parlour, and got full of the warm air, and nipped you up, and carried you tight and cosy into another warm room, where you could walk out without having to show your legs by going up steps, or down steps." Of course only one could go at a time ; but here again a little of Miss Browning's good management arranged everything so very nicely, as Miss Hornblower (their other visitor) remarked. She went first, and remained in the warm cloak-room until her hostess followed ; and then the two ladies went arm-in-arm into the ball-room, finding out convenient seats whence they could watch the arrivals and speak to their passing friends, until Miss Phoebe and Miss Piper entered, and came to take possession of the seats reserved for them by Miss Browning's care. These two younger ladies came in, also arm-in-arm, but with a certain timid flurry in look and movement very different from the composed dignity of their seniors (by two or three years). When all four were once more assembled together, they took breath, and began to converse.

"Upon my word, I really do think this is a better room than our Ashcombe Court-house !"

"And how prettily it is decorated !" piped out Miss Piper. "How well the roses are made ! But you all have such taste at Hollingford."

"There's Mrs. Dempster," cried Miss Hornblower ; "she said she and her two daughters were asked to stay at Mr. Sheepshanks'. Mr. Preston was to be there, too ; but I suppose they could not all come at once. Look ! and there is young Roscoe, our new doctor. I declare it seems as if all Ashcombe were here. Mr. Roscoe ! Mr. Roscoe ! come here and let me introduce you to Miss Browning, the friends we are staying with. We think very highly of our young doctor, I can assure you, Miss Browning."

Mr. Roscoe bowed, and simpered at hearing his own praises. But Miss Browning had no notion of having any doctor praised, who had come to settle on the very verge of Mr. Gibson's practice, so she said to Miss Hornblower,—

"You must be glad, I am sure, to have somebody you can call in, if you are in any sudden hurry, or for things that are too trifling to trouble Mr. Gibson about ; and I should think Mr. Roscoe would feel it a great advantage to profit, as he will naturally have the opportunity of doing, by witnessing Mr. Gibson's skill !"

Probably Mr. Roscoe would have felt more aggrieved by this speech

than he really was, if his attention had not been called off just then by the entrance of the very Mr. Gibson who was being spoken of. Almost before Miss Browning had ended her severe and depreciatory remarks, he had asked his friend Miss Hornblower,—

“Who is that lovely girl in pink, just come in?”

“Why, that’s Cynthia Kirkpatrick!” said Miss Hornblower, taking up a ponderous gold eyeglass to make sure of her fact. “How she has grown! To be sure it is two or three years since she left Ashcombe—she was very pretty then—people did say Mr. Preston admired her very much; but she was so young!”

“Can you introduce me?” asked the impatient young surgeon. “I should like to ask her to dance.”

When Miss Hornblower returned from her greeting to her former acquaintance, Mrs. Gibson, and had accomplished the introduction which Mr. Roscoe had requested, she began her little confidences to Miss Browning.

“Well, to be sure! How condescending we are! I remember the time when Mrs. Kirkpatrick wore old black silks, and was thankful and civil as became her place as a schoolmistress, and as having to earn her bread. And now she is in a satin; and she speaks to me as if she just could recollect who I was, if she tried very hard! It isn’t so long ago since Mrs. Dempster came to consult me as to whether Mrs. Kirkpatrick would be offended, if she sent her a new breadth for her lilac silk-gown, in place of one that had been spoilt by Mrs. Dempster’s servant spilling the coffee over it the night before; and she took it and was thankful, for all she’s dressed in pearl-grey satin now! And she would have been glad enough to marry Mr. Preston in those days.”

“I thought you said he admired her daughter,” put in Miss Browning to her irritated friend.

“Well! perhaps I did, and perhaps it was so; I am sure I can’t tell; he was a great deal at the house. Miss Dixon keeps a school in the same house now, and I am sure she does it a great deal better.”

“The earl and the countess are very fond of Mrs. Gibson,” said Miss Browning. “I know, for Lady Harriet told us when she came to drink tea with us last autumn; and they desired Mr. Preston to be very attentive to her when she lived at Ashcombe.”

“For goodness’ sake don’t go and repeat what I’ve been saying about Mr. Preston and Mrs. Kirkpatrick to her ladyship. One may be mistaken, and you know I only said ‘people talked about it.’”

Miss Hornblower was evidently alarmed lest her gossip should be repeated to the Lady Harriet, who appeared to be on such an intimate footing with her Hollingsford friends. Nor did Miss Browning dissipate the illusion. Lady Harriet had drunk tea with them, and might do it again; and, at any rate, the little fright she had put her friend into was not a bad return for that praise of Mr. Roscoe, which had offended Miss Browning’s loyalty to Mr. Gibson.

Meanwhile Miss Piper and Miss Phoebe, who had not the character of *esprit-forts* to maintain, talked of the dresses of the people present, beginning by complimenting each other.

"What a lovely turban you have got on, Miss Piper, if I may be allowed to say so: so becoming to your complexion!"

"Do you think so?" said Miss Piper, with ill-concealed gratification; it was something to have a "complexion" at forty-five. "I got it at Brown's, at Somerton, for this very ball. I thought I must have something to set off my gown, which isn't quite so new as it once was; and I have no handsome jewellery like you"—looking with admiring eyes at a large miniature set round with pearls, which served as a shield to Miss Phoebe's breast.

"It is handsome," that lady replied. "It is a likeness of my dear mother; Dorothy has got my father on. The miniatures were both taken at the same time; and just about then my uncle died and left us each a legacy of fifty pounds, which we agreed to spend on the setting of our miniatures. But because they are so valuable Dorothy always keeps them locked up with the best silver, and hides the box somewhere; she never will tell me where, because she says I've such weak nerves, and that if a burglar, with a loaded pistol at my head, were to ask me where we kept our plate and jewels, I should be sure to tell him; and she says, for her part, she would never think of revealing under any circumstances. (I'm sure I hope she won't be tried.) But that's the reason I don't wear it often; it's only the second time I've had it on; and I can't even get at it, and look at it, which I should like to do. I shouldn't have had it on to-night, but that Dorothy gave it out to me, saying it was but a proper compliment to pay to the Duchess of Menteith, who is to be here in all her diamonds."

"Dear-ah-me! Is she really! Do you know I never saw a duchess before." And Miss Piper drew herself up and craned her neck, as if resolved to "behave herself properly," as she had been taught to do at boarding-school thirty years before, in the presence of "her grace." By-and-by she said to Miss Phoebe, with a sudden jerk out of position,— "Look, look! that's our Mr. Cholmley, the magistrate (he was the great man of Coreham), and that's Mrs. Cholmley in red satin, and Mr. George and Mr. Harry from Oxford, I do declare; and Miss Cholmley, and pretty Miss Sophy. I should like to go and speak to them, but then it's so formidable crossing a room without a gentleman. And there is Coxe the butcher and his wife! Why, all Coreham seems to be here! And how Mrs. Coxe can afford such a gown I can't make out for one, for I know Coxe had some difficulty in paying for the last sheep he bought of my brother."

Just at this moment the band, consisting of two violins, a harp, and an occasional clarinet, having finished their tuning, and brought themselves as nearly into accord as was possible, struck up a brisk country-dance, and partners quickly took their places. Mrs. Gibson was secretly a little

annoyed at Cynthia's being one of those to stand up in this early dance, the performers in which were principally the punctual plebeians of Hollingsford, who, when a ball was fixed to begin at eight, had no notion of being later, and so losing part of the amusement for which they had paid their money. She imparted some of her feelings to Molly, sitting by her, longing to dance, and beating time to the spirited music with one of her pretty little feet.

"Your dear papa is always so very punctual! To-night it seems almost a pity, for we really are here before there is any one come that we know."

"Oh! I see so many people here that I know. There are Mr. and Mrs. Smeaton, and that nice good-tempered daughter."

"Oh! booksellers and butchers if you will."

"Papa has found a great many friends to talk to."

"Patients, my dear—hardly friends. There are some nice-looking people here," catching her eye on the Cholmleys; "but I daresay they have driven over from the neighbourhood of Ashecombe or Coreham, and have hardly calculated how soon they would get here. I wonder when the Towers' party will come. Ah! there's Mr. Ashton, and Mr. Preston Come, the room is beginning to fill."

So it was, for this was to be a very good ball, people said; and a large party from the Towers was coming, and a duchess in diamonds among the number. Every great house in the district was expected to be full of guests on these occasions; but, at this early hour, the townspeople had the floor almost entirely to themselves; the county magnates came dropping in later; and chiefest among them all was the lord-lieutenant from the Towers. But to-night they were unusually late, and the aristocratic ozone being absent from the atmosphere, there was a flatness about the dancing of all those who considered themselves above the plebeian ranks of the tradespeople. They, however, enjoyed themselves thoroughly, and sprang and pounded till their eyes sparkled and their cheeks glowed with exercise and excitement. Some of the more prudent parents, mindful of the next day's duties, began to consider at what hour they ought to go home; but with all there was an expressed or unexpressed curiosity to see the duchess and her diamonds; for the Menteith diamonds were famous in higher circles than that now assembled; and their fame had trickled down to it through the medium of ladies'-maids and housekeepers. Mr. Gibson had had to leave the ball-room for a time, as he had anticipated, but he was to return to his wife as soon as his duties were accomplished; and, in his absence, Mrs. Gibson kept herself a little aloof from the Miss Brownings and those of her acquaintance who would willingly have entered into conversation with her, with the view of attaching herself to the skirts of the Towers' party, when they should make their appearance. If Cynthia would not be so very ready in engaging herself to every possible partner who asked her to dance, there were sure to be young men staying at the Towers who would be on the look-out for pretty girls: and

who could tell to what a dance would lead? Molly, too, though a less good dancer than Cynthia, and, from her timidity, less graceful and easy, was becoming engaged pretty deeply; and, it must be confessed, she was longing to dance every dance, no matter with whom. Even she might not be available for the more aristocratic partners Mrs. Gibson anticipated. She was feeling very much annoyed with the whole proceedings of the evening when she was aware of some one standing by her; and, turning a little to one side, she saw Mr. Preston keeping guard, as it were, over the seats which Molly and Cynthia had just quitted. He was looking so black that, if their eyes had not met, Mrs. Gibson would have preferred not speaking to him; as it was, she thought it unavoidable.

"The rooms are not well-lighted to-night, are they, Mr. Preston?"

"No," said he; "but who could light such dingy old paint as this, loaded with evergreens, too, which always darken a room."

"And the company, too! I always think that freshness and brilliancy of dress go as far as anything to brighten up a room. Look what a set of people are here: the greater part of the women are dressed in dark silks, really only fit for a morning. The place will be quite different, by and by, when the county families are in a little more force."

Mr. Preston made no reply. He had put his glass in his eye, apparently for the purpose of catching the dancers. If its exact direction could have been ascertained, it would have been found that he was looking intently and angrily at a flying figure in pink muslin: many a one was gazing at Cynthia with intentness besides himself, but no one in anger. Mrs. Gibson was not so fine an observer as to read all this; but here was a gentlemanly and handsome young man, to whom she could prattle, instead of either joining herself on to objectionable people, or sitting all forlorn until the Towers' party came. So she went on with her small remarks.

"You are not dancing, Mr. Preston!"

"No! The partner I had engaged has made some mistake. I am waiting to have an explanation with her."

Mrs. Gibson was silent. An uncomfortable tide of recollections appeared to come over her; she, like Mr. Preston, watched Cynthia; the dance was ended, and she was walking round the room in easy unconcern as to what might await her. Presently her partner, Mr. Harry Cholmley, brought her back to her seat. She took that vacant next to Mr. Preston, leaving that by her mother for Molly's occupation. The latter returned a moment afterwards to her place. Cynthia seemed entirely unconscious of Mr. Preston's neighbourhood. Mrs. Gibson leaned forwards, and said to her daughter,—

"Your last partner was a gentleman, my dear. You are improving in your selection. I really was ashamed of you before, figuring-away with that attorney's clerk. Molly, do you know whom you have been dancing with? I have found out he is the Cireham bookseller."

"That accounts for his being so well up in all the books I have been

wanting to hear about," said Molly, eagerly, but with a spice of malice in her mind. "He really was very pleasant, mamma," she added; "and he looks quite a gentleman, and dances beautifully!"

"Very well. But remember if you go on this way you will have to shake hands over the counter to-morrow morning with some of your partners of to-night," said Mrs. Gibson, coldly.

"But I really don't know how to refuse when people are introduced to me and ask me, and I am longing to dance. You know to-night it is a charity-ball, and papa said everybody danced with everybody," said Molly, in a pleading tone of voice; for she could not quite and entirely enjoy herself if she was out of harmony with any one. What reply Mrs. Gibson would have made to this speech cannot now be ascertained, for, before she could make reply, Mr. Preston stepped a little forwards, and said, in a tone which he meant to be icily indifferent, but which trembled with anger,—

"If Miss Gibson finds any difficulty in refusing a partner, she has only to apply to Miss Kirkpatrick for instructions."

Cynthia lifted up her beautiful eyes, and, fixing them on Mr. Preston's face, said, very quietly, as if only stating a matter of fact,—

"You forget, I think, Mr. Preston: Miss Gibson implied that she wished to dance with the person who asked her—that makes all the difference. I can't instruct her how to act in that difficulty."

And to the rest of this little conversation, Cynthia appeared to lend no ear; and she was almost directly claimed by her next partner. Mr. Preston took the seat now left empty much to Molly's annoyance. At first she feared lest he should be going to ask her to dance; but, instead, he put out his hand for Cynthia's nosegay, which she had left on rising, entrusted to Molly. It had suffered considerably from the heat of the room, and was no longer full and fresh; not so much so as Molly's, which had not, in the first instance, been pulled to pieces in picking out the scarlet flowers which now adorned Molly's hair, and which had since been cherished with more care. Enough, however, remained of Cynthia's to show very distinctly that it was not the one Mr. Preston had sent; and it was perhaps to convince himself of this, that he rudely asked to examine it. But Molly, faithful to what she imagined would be Cynthia's wish, refused to allow him to touch it; she only held it a little nearer.

"Miss Kirkpatrick has not done me the honour of wearing the bouquet I sent her, I see. She received it, I suppose, and my note?"

"Yes," said Molly, rather intimidated by the tone in which this was said. "But we had already accepted these two nosegays."

Mrs. Gibbon was just the person to come to the rescue with her honeyed words on such an occasion as the present. She evidently was rather afraid of Mr. Preston, and wished to keep at peace with him.

"Oh, yes, we were so sorry! Of course, I don't mean to say we could be sorry for any one's kindness; but two such lovely nosegays had been sent from Hamley Hall—you may see how beautiful from

what Molly holds in her hand — and they had come before yours, Mr. Preston."

"I should have felt honoured if you had accepted of mine, since the young ladies were so well provided for. I was at some pains in selecting the flowers at Green's; I think I may say it was rather more recherché than that of Miss Kirkpatrick's, which Miss Gibson holds so tenderly and securely in her hand."

"Oh, because Cynthia would take out the most effective flowers to put in my hair!" exclaimed Molly, eagerly.

"Did she?" said Mr. Preston, with a certain accent of pleasure in his voice, as though he were glad she set so little store by the nosegay; and he walked off to stand behind Cynthia in the quadrille that was being danced; and Molly saw him making her reply to him—against her will, Molly was sure. But, somehow, his face and manner implied power over her. She looked grave, deaf, indifferent, indignant, defiant; but, after a half-whispered speech to Cynthia, at the conclusion of the dance, she evidently threw him an impatient consent to what he was asking, for he walked off with a disagreeable smile of satisfaction on his handsome face.

All this time the murmurs were spreading at the lateness of the party from the Towers, and person after person came up to Mrs. Gibson as if she were the accredited authority as to the earl and countess's plans. In one sense this was flattering; but then the acknowledgment of common ignorance and wonder reduced her to the level of the inquirers. Mrs. Good-enough felt herself particularly aggrieved; she had had her spectacles on for the last hour and a half, in order to be ready for the sight the very first minute any one from the Towers appeared at the door.

"I had a headache," she complained, "and I should have sent my money, and never stirred out o' doors to-night; for I've seen a many of these here balls, and my lord and my lady too, when they were better worth looking at nor they are now; but every one was talking of the duchess, and the duchess and her diamonds, and I thought I shouldn't like to be behindhand, and never ha' seen neither the duchess nor her diamonds; so I'm here, and coal and candlelight wasting away at home, for I told Sally to sit up for me; and, above everything, I cannot abide waste. I took it from my mother, who was such a one against waste as you never see now-a-days. She was a manager, if ever there was a one; and I brought up nine children on less than any one else could do, I'll be bound. Why! She wouldn't let us be extravagant—not even in the matter of colds. Whenever any on us had got a pretty bad cold, she took the opportunity and cut our hair; for she said, said she, it was of no use having two colds when one would do—and cutting of our hair was sure to give us a cold. But, for all that, I wish the duchess would come."

"Ah! but fancy what it is to me," sighed out Mrs. Gibson; "so long as I have been without seeing the dear family—and seeing so little of them the other day when I was at the Towers (for the duchess would

have my opinion on Lady Alice's trousseau, and kept asking me so many questions it took up all the time)—and Lady Harriet's last words were a happy anticipation of our meeting to-night. It's nearly twelve o'clock."

Every one of any pretensions to gentility was painfully affected by the absence of the family from the Towers; the very fiddlers seemed unwilling to begin playing a dance that might be interrupted by the entrance of the great folks. Miss Phoebe Browning had apologized for them—Miss Browning had blamed them with calm dignity; it was only the butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers who rather enjoyed the absence of restraint, and were happy and hilarious.

At last, there was a rumbling, and a rushing, and a whispering, and the music stopped, so the dancers were obliged to do so too, and in came Lord Cumnor in his state dress, with a fat, middle-aged woman on his arm; she was dressed almost like a girl—in a sprigged muslin, with natural flowers in her hair, but not a vestige of a jewel or a diamond. Yet it must be the duchess; but what was a duchess without diamonds?—and in a dress which farmer Hodson's daughter might have worn! Was it the duchess? Could it be the duchess? The little crowd of inquirers around Mrs. Gibson thickened, to hear her confirm their disappointing surmise. After the duchess came Lady Cumnor, looking like Lady Macbeth in black velvet—a cloud upon her brow, made more conspicuous by the lines of age rapidly gathering on her handsome face; and Lady Harriet, and other ladies, amongst whom there was one dressed so like the duchess as to suggest the idea of a sister rather than a daughter, as far as dress went. There was Lord Hollingsford, plain in face, awkward in person, gentlemanly in manner; and half-a-dozen younger men, Lord Albert Monson, Captain James, and others of their age and standing, who came in looking anything if not critical. This long-expected party swept up to the seats reserved for them at the head of the room, apparently regardless of the interruption they caused; for the dancers stood aside, and almost dispersed back to their seats, and when "Money-musk" struck up again, not half the former set of people stood up to finish the dance.

Lady Harriet, who was rather different to Miss Piper, and no more minded crossing the room alone than if the lookers-on were so many cabbages, spied the Gibson party pretty quickly out, and came across to them.

"Here we are at last. How d'ye do, dear? Why, little one (to Molly), how nice you're looking! Aren't we shamefully late?"

"Oh! it's only just past twelve," said Mrs. Gibson; "and I dare say you dined very late."

"It was not that; it was that ill-mannered woman, who went to her own room after we came out from dinner, and she and Lady Alice stayed there invisible, till we thought they were putting on some splendid attire—as they ought to have done—and at half-past ten when mamma sent up to them to say the carriages were at the door, the duchess sent down for

some beef-tea, and at last appeared à l'enfant as you see her. Mamma is so angry with her, and some of the others are annoyed at not coming earlier, and one or two are giving themselves airs about coming at all. Papa is the only one who is not affected by it." Then turning to Molly Lady Harriet asked,—

"Have you been dancing much, Miss Gibson?"

"Yes; not every dance, but nearly all."

It was a simple question enough; but Lady Harriet's speaking at all to Molly had become to Mrs. Gibson almost like shaking a red rag at a bull; it was the one thing sure to put her out of temper. But she would not have shown this to Lady Harriet for the world; only she contrived to baffle any endeavours at further conversation between the two, by placing herself between Lady Harriet and Molly, whom the former asked to sit down in the absent Cynthia's room.

"I won't go back to those people, I am so mad with them; and, besides, I hardly saw you the other day, and I must have some gossip with you." So she sat down by Mrs. Gibson, and as Mrs. Goodenough afterwards expressed it, "looked like anybody else." Mrs. Goodenough said this to excuse herself for a little misadventure she fell into. She had taken a deliberate survey of the grandes at the upper end of the room, spectacles on nose, and had inquired, in no very measured voice, who everybody was, from Mr. Sheepshanks, my lord's agent, and her very good neighbour, who in vain tried to check her loud ardour for information by replying to her in whispers. But she was rather deaf as well as blind, so his low tones only brought upon him fresh inquiries. Now, satisfied as far as she could be, and on her way to departure, and the extinguishing of fire and candlelight, she stopped opposite to Mrs. Gibson, and thus addressed her by way of renewal of their former subject of conversation,—

"Such a shabby thing for a duchess I never saw; not a bit of a diamond near her. They're none of them worth looking at except the countess, and she's always a personable woman, and not so lusty as she was. But they're not worth waiting up for till this time o' night."

There was a moment's pause. Then Lady Harriet put her hand out, and said,—

"You don't remember me, but I know you from having seen you at the Towers. Lady Cumnor is a good deal thinner than she was, but we hope her health is better for it."

"It's Lady Harriet," said Mrs. Gibson to Mrs. Goodenough, in reproachful dismay.

"Deary me, your ladyship! I hope I've given no offence! But, you see—that is to say, your ladyship sees, that it's late hours for such folks as me, and I only stayed out of my bed to see the duchess, and I thought she'd come in diamonds and a coronet; and it puts one out at my age, to be disappointed in the only chance I'm like to have of so fine a night."

"I'm put out too," said Lady Harriet. "I wanted to have come early, and here we are as late as this. I'm so cross and ill-tempered, I should be glad to hide myself in bed as soon as you will do."

She said this so sweetly that Mrs. Goodenough relaxed into a smile, and her crabbedness into a compliment.

"I don't believe as ever your ladyship can be cross and ill-tempered with that pretty face. I'm an old woman, so you must let me say so." Lady Harriet stood up, and made a low curtsey. Then holding out her hand, she said,—

"I won't keep you up any longer; but I'll promise one thing in return for your pretty speech: if ever I am a duchess, I'll come and show myself to you in all my robes and gewgaws. Good-night, madam!"

"There! I knew how it would be!" said she, not resuming her seat. "And on the eve of a county election too."

"Oh! you must not take old Mrs. Goodenough as a specimen, dear Lady Harriet. She is always a grumbler! I am sure no one else would complain of your all being as late as you liked," said Mrs. Gibson.

"What do you say, Molly?" said Lady Harriet, suddenly turning her eyes on Molly's face. "Don't you think we've lost some of our popularity,—which at this time means votes—by coming so late. Come, answer me! you used to be a famous little truth-teller."

"I don't know about popularity or votes," said Molly, rather unwillingly. "But I think many people were sorry you did not come sooner; and isn't that rather a proof of popularity?" she added.

"That's a very neat and diplomatic answer," said Lady Harriet, smiling, and tapping Molly's cheek with her fan.

"Molly knows nothing about it," said Mrs. Gibson, a little off her guard. "It would be very impertinent if she or any one else questioned Lady Cunnor's perfect right to come when she chose."

"Well, all I know is, I must go back to mamma now; but I shall make another raid into these regions by-and-by, and you must keep a place for me. Ah! there are—Miss Brownings; you see I don't forget my lesson, Miss Gibson."

"Molly, I cannot have you speaking so to Lady Harriet," said Mrs. Gibson, as soon as she was left alone with her step-daughter. "You would never have known her at all if it had not been for me, and don't be always putting yourself into our conversation."

"But I must speak if she asks me questions," pleaded Molly.

"Well! if you must, you must, I acknowledge. I'm candid about that at any rate. But there's no need for you to set up to have an opinion at your age."

"I don't know how to help it," said Molly.

"She's such a whimsical person; look there, if she's not talking to Miss Phoebe; and Miss Phoebe is so weak she'll be easily led away into fancying she is hand and glove with Lady Harriet. If there is one thing

I hate more than another, it is the trying to make out an intimacy with great people."

Molly felt innocent enough, so she offered no justification of herself, and made no reply. Indeed she was more occupied in watching Cynthia. She could not understand the change that seemed to have come over the latter. She was dancing, it was true, with the same lightness and grace as before, but the smooth bounding motion as of a feather blown onwards by the wind was gone. She was conversing with her partner, but without the soft animation that usually shone out upon her countenance. And when she was brought back to her seat Molly noticed her changed colour, and her dreamily abstracted eyes.

"What is the matter, Cynthia?" asked she, in a very low voice.

"Nothing," said Cynthia, suddenly looking up, and in an accent of what was in her, sharpness. "Why should there be?"

"I don't know; but you look different to what you did—tired or something."

"There is nothing the matter, or, if there is, don't talk about it. It is all your fancy."

This was a rather contradictory speech, to be interpreted by intuition rather than by logic. Molly understood that Cynthia wished for quietness and silence. But what was her surprise, after the speeches that had passed before, and the implication of Cynthia's whole manner to Mr. Preston, to see him come up, and, without a word, offer his arm to Cynthia and lead her off to dance. It appeared to strike Mrs. Gibson as something remarkable, for, forgetting her late passage at arms with Molly, he asked, wonderingly, as if almost distrusting the evidence of her senses,—

"Is Cynthia going to dance with Mr. Preston?"

Molly had scarcely time to answer before she herself was led off by her partner. She could hardly attend to him or to the figures of the quadrille for watching for Cynthia among the moving forms.

Once she caught a glimpse of her standing still—downcast—listening to Mr. Preston's eager speech. Again she was walking languidly among the dancers, almost as if she took no notice of those around her. When she and Molly joined each other again, the shade on Cynthia's face had deepened to gloom. But, at the same time, if a physiognomist had studied her expression, he would have read in it defiance and anger, and perhaps also a little perplexity. While this quadrille had been going on, Lady Harriet had been speaking to her brother.

"Hollingsford!" she said, laying her hand on his arm, and drawing him a little apart from the well-born crowd amid which he stood, silent and abstracted, "you don't know how these good people here have been hurt and disappointed with our being so late, and with the duchess's ridiculous simplicity of dress."

"Why should they mind it?" asked he, taking advantage of her being cut of breath with eagerness.

"Oh, don't be so wise and stupid ; don't you see, we're a show and a spectacle—it's like having a pantomime with harlequin and columbine in plain clothes."

"I don't understand how——" he began.

"Then take it upon trust. They really are a little disappointed, whether they are logical or not in being so, and we must try and make it up to them ; for one thing, because I can't bear our vassals to look dissatisfied and disloyal, and then there's the election in June."

"I really would as soon be out of the House as in it."

"Nonsense ; it would grieve papa beyond measure—but there is no time to talk about that now. You must go and dance with some of the townspeople, and I'll ask Sheepshanks to introduce me to a respectable young farmer. Can't you get Captain James to make himself useful ? There he goes with Lady Alice ! If I don't get him introduced to the ugliest tailor's daughter I can find for the next dance !" She put her arm in her brother's as she spoke, as if to lead him to some partner. He resisted, however—resisted piteously.

"Pray don't, Harriet. You know I can't dance. I hate it ; I always did. I don't know how to get through a quadrille."

"It's a country dance !" said she, resolutely.

"It's all the same. And what shall I say to my partner ? I haven't a notion : I shall have no subject in common. Speak of being disappointed, they'll be ten times more disappointed when they find I can neither dance nor talk ! "

"I'll be merciful ; don't be so cowardly. In their eyes a lord may dance like a bear—as some lords not very far from me are—if he likes, and they'll take it for grace. And you shall begin with Molly Gibson, your friend the doctor's daughter. She's a good, simple, intelligent little girl, which you'll think a great deal more of, I suppose, than of the frivolous fact of her being very pretty. Clare ! will you allow me to introduce my brother to Miss Gibson ? he hopes to engage her for this dance. Lord Hollingsford, Miss Gibson ! "

Poor Lord Hollingsford ! there was nothing for it but for him to follow his sister's very explicit lead, and Molly and he walked off to their places, each heartily wishing their dance together well over. Lady Harriet flew off to Mr. Sheepshanks to secure her respectable young farmer, and Mrs. Gibson remained alone, wishing that Lady Cumnor would send one of her attendant gentlemen for her. It would be so much more agreeable to be sitting even at the fag-end of nobility than here on a bench with everybody ; hoping that everybody would see Molly dancing away with a lord, yet vexed that the chance had so befallen that Molly instead of Cynthia was the young lady singled out ; wondering if simplicity of dress was now become the highest fashion, and pondering on the possibility of cleverly inducing Lady Harriet to introduce Lord Albert Monson to her own beautiful daughter, Cynthia.

Molly found Lord Hollingsford, the wise and learned Lord Hollingsford,

strangely stupid in understanding the mystery of "Cross hands and back again, down the middle and up again." He was constantly getting hold of the wrong hands, and as constantly stopping when he had returned to his place, quite unaware that the duties of society and the laws of the game required that he should go on capering till he had arrived at the bottom of the room. He perceived that he had performed his part very badly, and apologized to Molly when once they had arrived at that haven of comparative peace, and he expressed his regret so simply and heartily that she felt at her ease with him at once, especially when he had confided to her his reluctance at having to dance at all, and his only doing it under his sister's compulsion. To Molly he was an elderly widower, almost as old as her father, and by-and-by they got into very pleasant conversation. She learnt from him that Roger Hamley had just been publishing a paper in some scientific periodical, which had excited considerable attention, as it was intended to confute some theory of a great French physiologist, and Roger's article proved the writer to be possessed of a most unusual amount of knowledge on the subject. This piece of news was of great interest to Molly, and, in her questions, she herself evinced so much intelligence, and a mind so well prepared for the reception of information, that Lord Hollingsford at any rate would have felt his quest of popularity a very easy affair indeed, if he might have gone on talking quietly to Molly during the rest of the evening. When he took her back to her place, he found Mr. Gibson there, and fell into talk with him, until Lady Harriet once more came to stir him up to his duties. Before very long, however, he returned to Mr. Gibson's side, and began telling him of this paper of Roger Hamley's, of which Mr. Gibson had not yet heard. In the midst of their conversation, as they stood close by Mrs. Gibson, Lord Hollingsford saw Molly in the distance, and interrupted himself to say, "What a charming little lady that daughter of yours is! Most girls of her age are so difficult to talk to; but she is intelligent and full of interest in all sorts of sensible things; well read, too—she was up in *Le Regne Animal*—and very pretty!"

Mr. Gibson bowed, much pleased at such a compliment from such a man, was he lord or not. It is very likely that if Molly had been a stupid listener, Lord Hollingsford would not have discovered her beauty, or the converse might be asserted—if she had not been young and pretty he would not have exerted himself to talk on scientific subjects in a manner which she could understand. But in whatever manner Molly had won his approbation and admiration, there was no doubt that she had earned it somehow. And, when she next returned to her place, Mrs. Gibson greeted her with soft words and a gracious smile; for it does not require much reasoning power to discover that if it is a very fine thing to be mother-in-law to a very magnificent three-tailed baahaw, it pre-supposes that the wife who makes the connection between the two parties is in harmony with her mother. And so far had Mrs. Gibson's thoughts wandered into futurity. She only wished that the happy chance had fallen to Cynthia's

instead of to Molly's lot. But Molly was a docile, sweet creature, very pretty, and remarkably intelligent, as my lord had said. It was a pity that Cynthia preferred making millinery to reading; but perhaps that could be rectified. And there was Lord Cumnor coming to speak to her, and Lady Cumnor nodding to her, and indicating a place by her side.

It was not an unsatisfactory ball upon the whole to Mrs. Gibson, although she paid the usual penalty for sitting up beyond her usual hour in perpetual glare and inovement. The next morning she awoke irritable and fatigued; and a little of the same feeling oppressed both Cynthia and Molly. The former was lounging in the window-seat, holding a three-days-old newspaper in her hand, which she was making a pretence of reading, when she was startled by her mother's saying,—

“Cynthia! can't you take up a book and improve yourself. I am sure your conversation will never be worth listening to, unless you read something better than newspapers. Why don't you keep up your French? There was some French book that Molly was reading—*Le Règne Animal*, I think.”

“No! I never read it!” said Molly, blushing. “Mr. Roger Hamley sometimes read pieces out of it when I was first at the Hall, and told me what it was about.”

“Oh! well. Then I suppose I was mistaken. But it comes to all the same thing. Cynthia, you really must learn to settle yourself to some improving reading every morning.”

Rather to Molly's surprise, Cynthia did not reply a word; but dutifully went and brought down from among her Boulogne school-books, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*. But after a while Molly saw that this “improving reading” was just as much a mere excuse for Cynthia's thinking her own thoughts as the newspaper had been.

Hearts of Oak.

THE collier captain is going fast off the stage : There is a shadow already on the slides. Steam, all-powerful steam, is driving him away. He has stood long and battled manfully, but it needs no prophetic eye to see on which side the victory will ultimately incline. Let us stop him for a moment.

Generally above the average height, but always with broad shoulders, or, as he would express it, "plenty of beam," the old captain of the collier may be seen in Thames Street, or on Tower Hill, making his way, slowly and deliberately, to some office in that neighbourhood. His vessel, the *Nymph*, very full-bodied, and by no means prepossessing in appearance, is in the pool. "Coals and gravel" and "gravel and coals," alternately, are the only visitors she receives. She is one of a class numbering 7,000 or 8,000, always employed in bringing comfort to the fire-side. Their tonnage varies from 90 to 600 N. N. measurement, the average number being of the burden of 200 or 250 tons. The tonnage is not, however, the extent of their carrying capacity. This varies according to the shape of the vessel and the description of coal with which it is loaded, but it is always far in excess of the actual tonnage. Thus a vessel measuring 260 tons calculated according to the rules prescribed by the Merchant Shipping Act, has been known to carry upwards of 400 tons of coals.

Very few vessels are built purposely for this trade. The history of the building, career, and conversion of many of them to their present use would be highly entertaining. One, in bygone days, has been a fruiterer, and dashed home from St. Michael's through the foaming Bay of Biscay with the first cargo of oranges ; another has brought gold-dust and palm-oil from the western coast of Africa, until Lloyd's surveyor intimated that a considerable outlay would be necessary previously to another voyage ; whilst a third, built by easy-going Dutchmen, struck on a sand in the Channel and was saved from an ignominious end only to be bought as a wreck by old Captain Pottle, and repaired and renovated in order that his son might attain the proud position of "master of a collier."

The individuality, therefore, so to speak, of the vessel is maintained ; but there are many points of similarity in each, partaking sometimes of a negative rather than of a positive character. Thus the fruiterer loses her copper at once, the West African its taunt topmasts and long yards, and the Dutchman that pleasant house on deck where his crew slept in delightful proximity to each other. Then the masts are seldom clean ; the sails are not white, and as a point of positive resemblance the "pumps" are frequently going. In a collier having only ballast, a few feet of water is not thought of much consequence, unless it rises to the "floor" of the

ship, when the insouciance with which this inveterate habit of the ship is regarded, is for the moment laid aside, and the pumps are manned. A second point of resemblance is the jaunty air they assume when damaged, and as they generally meet with some mishaps on their voyage to or from the North, this similarity is most obvious. To meet a collier without a hole or patch in her sails, or jib-boom gone, or railing or bulwark "carried away," is a rare sight. Captains of other vessels would have the damages repaired at once, but with the collier this matter is postponed until his arrival at home.

Then no other vessels are subject to such changes of depression and elevation as the collier. When loaded she is uncomfortably close to the water, and if there be much sea, is terribly wet and unpleasantly dangerous. There is no buoyancy whatever in her. Instead of rising gently to the approaching wave, she plunges under it, and half drowns a man who may happen to be on the bowsprit before she recovers from the shock. If at anchor, and the weather be stormy, she is nearly as bad, and rides "bows under." When "in ballast," she is perhaps the most unwieldy machine afloat. It is true that, with a fair wind, she will sail tolerably well, but the sea must not be rough or she will roll so much as to endanger the safety of the masts. In fine weather, and with a tide running strongly in her favour, the light collier will imitate the manœuvre of "working to windward." It is at best, however, only a burlesque, as a spectator who on shore watches one of them will readily perceive. It is the tide which is really drifting the vessel against the wind, very much in the same way as they are frequently seen "dropping down" the Thames. But if a strong wind, or a summer's breeze, spring up, the light collier is no bad example of the folly of appearing great without an adequate substructure of ability or character : at the first warning of the impending change the bird must be stripped of its plumage, and trust for safety to a rusty chain. The wind is blowing on the shore, or towards a sand : all depends on the chain.

In other vessels placed in an emergency of that character the sails are reefed and ready to be hoisted, so as to enable the ship to gain an offing, but with the light collier this is impracticable. If sails were loosed she would be on her beam-ends, or perhaps capsize altogether. All that can be done is to watch the chain, and, like those of old, "pray for daylight."

Then the light collier is subject to much caprice about turning round, or "coming about," and not unfrequently "jibes" altogether, and much coaxing and delicate handling are required to induce a compliance with the captain's wish. He, good honest man, never blames the ship ; the man did not "put the helm down" at the right time, is the excuse he will make.

The vessel is perhaps tacking between a sand and the shore, with a strong ebb-tide in her favour, and the captain being anxious to make the most of the daylight, approaches the sand-bank as closely as prudence, guided by the soundings of the lead, dictates. He then gives the order "beat ship there," but the *Happy Family* is ill-tempered, and yields little

obedience to the governing power. The captain glances upwards. "Hard down, I say," is shouted. "Hard it is, sir," replies the man who is steering; and as he speaks he gives an extra tug at one of the spokes in the wheel, to show that he is right. The master waits a moment, then says, "She won't come round; we must fill on her again. Up helm." So the fat face of the *Happy Family* is turned away from the wind in order to give her breath, and perhaps induce a better frame of mind. But the coaxing is useless. From a staid matron apparently dreading a pirouette, she now seems given to flirtation, and elated by the attention of a summer's puff, runs away from her chaperon, and is hard and fast in the sand before the helm can be firmly put down again. And this is the cause of the paragraph which will appear in the shipping intelligence of *The Times* on the following morning:—"Yarmouth, January 18. Fine. Wind N.E. The *Happy Family*, in working through the Roads, missed stays, and went ashore on the Scroby. Assisted off by beachmen, and towed into harbour. Seems much strained, and must go on slip for repairs."

Characterized by good nature and simplicity, the collier captain passes his life in dangers and difficulties. There is no six weeks' run for him with a fair wind and neither "sheet nor tack" altered, no getting into the "trades," and no pleasant passengers to while away the time in calms. There is one exception, perhaps—his dog, and that he values. It caught a thief who had entered his cabin, and it jumped overboard in a heavy sea after his hat. Besides, his children play with him when he is at home, and if they venture too far in the surf its great shaggy head is soon close to them, and they are pulled, half in earnest half in sport, on the dry land. To watch the gambols of his children and dog is the highest enjoyment he knows.

When freights are high, and the captain is part owner, he has been known to build a house, but then he excuses the expenditure on the ground that if "anything should happen to him his family won't be turned adrift." The builder designs the house, but two things are indispensable—a bay window, in order that there may be a "good look-out," and cupboards, or "lockers" as Captain Pottle terms them, inside. "They are so handy, sir, for stowing things away," was the apologetical remark made by that worthy man as we expressed surprise at the number of brass buttons and handles shining in each corner of the room. They doubtless remind him of similar receptacles in the cabin of his ship, where he and the "mate" have passed many hours together, sometimes in pleasant talk, sometimes in anxious debate as to their propinquity to a sand when the fog has been thick and no light visible.

Besides the mate, there are usually in a collier of 200 tons three able seamen and two apprentices, the younger of whom is designated "boy," and what that boy does is marvellous. He is of course compelled to obey the captain and mate, and the seamen exact obedience from him too. He is always wanted. If one of the able seamen is ordered to pull a sheet or rope more tightly, he wants the boy to hold on the end of it.

If any halliard is jammed in a block, or any confusion in the ropes aloft, the "boy" is sent up at once either to "cast off" the knot or report what is the matter. The captain wants him in the cabin, the cook in the galley, the mate on deck, and the three able seamen close to the precise spot where they happen to be. He is sent up to unroll the "burgee," which is foul; down in the forepeak for a coil of rope. It is "Figaro quâ, Figaro là, Figaro su, Figaro giú." And "where's that boy?" "bless that boy!" "that boy's no use at all!" are exclamations which add considerable piquancy to the conversation of a collier's crew. But when danger comes and the boat is launched off the deck of the foundering ship, the "boy" is put first into it; or if a rope is the only means of communication between a stranded vessel and the shore, some strong man may go first to see that "all is right," but the boy is the second.

The boys who determine on a seafaring life are sometimes country lads, tired of the plough, very difficult to teach, and frequently very obstinate; boys from towns with a great deal of low cunning and a hazy notion of the rights of property; and boys who have relatives at sea, and who are disagreeable by continually making invidious comparisons between their master and others, or their fellow-seamen and friends. Perhaps, too, they are natives of the place whence the vessel hails, and are "well up" in all the local gossip of the port. If so, that boy will render every crew discontented. The best apprentices are the boys from the different Unions. Their habits are generally clean and tidy; they are sufficiently educated to amuse themselves during their leisure hours by reading, and if not spoilt by the mistaken kindness of their friends in enticing them from the ship when in harbour, make good seamen. But the lads too frequently yield to the temptation unwisely presented to them, and it requires great tact to keep them steadily to their duties.

The captain, mate, three men, the apprentice and the boy, do not lead idle lives. There are fourteen sails to be hoisted, reefed, stowed and hauled about, besides those set in light weather on booms projecting from the yards, and called studding-sails.

Under ordinary circumstances, nine out of the fourteen sails would be kept set during the night. The crew would be divided into two watches, one half being at rest. Excluding, therefore, the boy and the man who is steering, there are only two men to shift these nine sails from time to time as exigencies require. And it must be remembered that the ropes are not made of Manila hemp, neither are there patent blocks. No wonder that the captain is frequently on deck during the whole night. On him rests the whole responsibility of the lives of himself and crew, and the safety of the ship. His perils are numerous, and beset him at every step. He fears a collision when at sea, and in bays and rivers he is subject to the same casualty. So are mariners generally: but there is one kind of collision of which he is frequently the victim, and generally from vessels of his own character, and it arises in this wise:—Let us assume that the wind has been blowing in a particular direction for some days, and that a

large number of vessels have been windbound. At length it shifts, and all move off as quickly as possible, and with varying speed hasten on their voyage. But the wind dies away, the ebb-tide is running fast; and the whole "fleet," as it is sometimes called, must anchor. This they accordingly do, and it follows that some are, more or less, in dangerous proximity to each other. The chain attached to the anchor, and made fast through a hawse-pipe to the bow or forepart of the vessel, acts as a pivot on which it swings, and the wind and tide, each in its turn, cause the vessel to move on this pivot, sometimes to the extent of a fourth part of a circle. Hence it follows that if three or four vessels be moored abreast of each other, they are very likely, whilst waltzing in this manner, to foul each other. To prevent this, an able master will endeavour to make his vessel "lie with a sheer." This is done by putting his helm to port or starboard, just as the sea-room on either side may warrant. If the tiller or helm be put to the starboard, the rudder is moved to the port-side of the ship, and the tide impinging on it with velocity drives the stern in the contrary direction, *i.e.* to starboard, as far as the force of the wind will permit; and it is no uncommon thing, assuming the wind to be blowing, and the tide to be running from north to south, to see ships at anchor with their bows or foreparts directed towards the north-west or north-east. Great care is required in watching the vessel in this position, lest it should fall off or "break its sheer." If it do so, and the wind be strong, the ship comes smashing round, driven by the combined force of the wind and tide, into its next neighbour.

As many as five vessels have been disabled or damaged by one breaking her sheer. The prolonged suspense of this sort of collision can scarcely be exaggerated. It is different to the thundering crash caused by two vessels meeting each other "end on," the hasty scramble from the sinking ship, or the "cita mors" which unfortunately overtakes some. The chances are that here the yards and running rigging become interlaced in a maze of confusion, whilst the hulls are battering each other to pieces. Ropes are cut remorselessly, chains unshackled, spars sent adrift, and every conceivable effort made to cause a separation. These are often successful, and if, as sometimes happens, the wind has changed during the collision, an energetic captain will order his men to "clear away the wreck," and refusing all assistance from sympathizing beachmen, sail away for his port of destination, rather proud than otherwise that his crippled condition makes him the cynosure of nautical eyes on board the different craft he meets.

To this kind of collision he is also subject when riding at anchor in his favourite spots in the Thames, as Sea Reach and Bugby's Hole. Supposing him, however, to have weighed his anchor, and managed, with the aid of a waterman, to get down the river with the loss only of his jolly-boat, which was being towed behind him, and, as he says in his letter to the owner, was cut in two by Citizen boat No. 20, he has still much to think about.

Between the Thames and Flamborough Head, a distance in round numbers of 200 miles only, there are 41 distinct sands, exclusive of those lying in inlets, such as the "Wash" and the "Humber," and of "points," or "nesses," jutting from the coast into the sea. They vary in length from one mile to fifteen. One is shaped like a crocodile, another is round and plump as a porpoise, whilst a third will have an elbow or hook at its termination as if resolutely bent on catching its prey; and all form most uncomfortable resting-places for tired colliers. Over these 200 miles something like 5,000 colliers are continually passing.

In addition to the 5,000 colliers there are steamers and schooners from Scotland, Humber keels employed in the grain-trade, timber-ships from the Baltic, Dutchmen with oil-cake, Prussians with corn, vessels carrying fish from the Dogger Bank, fleets of luggers engaged in the herring and mackerel fisheries, and the ubiquitous barge.

During the night, whether sailing or at anchor, all these vessels must exhibit lights, and it can easily be imagined, therefore, how, in foggy weather, or with sleet and snow driven by a strong north-east wind into his eyes, the captain may easily fall into an error respecting the position or character of a light when first seen. The Trinity Board have, by making some lights revolve, and others flash red or green, done all that science and care can effect to make them easily recognizable; but when a man has been on deck for a night and a day, and the second night finds him still there, with his vessel labouring under double-reefed topsails, and the pump at work during every watch, he is entitled to some consideration if his faculties are not just then of that high order which is considered the standard of nautical intelligence.

It is almost remarkable, considering the number of coasting-vessels annually wrecked, how few are lost in consequence of an error of this nature. The gales of the last two months have made dreadful havoc amongst shipping, but we do not, at the moment, remember an instance of the destruction of a vessel from the cause we are now considering. The loss of the unfortunate *Friendship* is, no doubt, attributable to the same cause as that of the steamer *Stanley*—the want of a leading light into Shields Harbour. Now that vessels drawing ten or twelve feet of water can enter the Tyne at low water, a light of the kind indicated is absolutely necessary. Nothing indeed should be left undone which would either afford guidance or succour to the hardy mariners who brave the winter's tempests on our perilous coast.

The captain of the collier is faithful to death. When, at last, his body is washed ashore, the ship's accounts and papers are always found securely buttoned in the breast pocket of his pea-jacket. In the fearful gale of December last, a captain lost his life entirely in consequence of this attention to duty.

We could narrate many, very many episodes illustrative of the loss of colliers and the men who navigate them; but we will content ourselves with one, which, if written in a work of fiction, would be styled "far-fetched."

The owner of the *Ellen* lived on the banks of a river. His residence was distant from the sea about five miles. The captain of the *Ellen* was a serious and well-disposed man, and out of his earnings supported a widowed mother and a sister. The *Ellen* was chartered to Wales for coals to be brought to the port to which she belonged. Before she rounded the Land's End she had been in collision twice and driven through stress of weather into Torbay.

She sailed from Milford Haven on the 18th of November, but was compelled to return on the following day. The captain writes of himself and fellow-coasters :—"A heavy gale from W.S.W.; forced to bear up. Got in all safe; thick with rain at 2 A.M. At daylight there was nothing to see but wrecks and ships dismasted. A large full-rigged ship drove on the shore." Then on the 22nd of November he makes another trial and reaches St. Ann's Light, but is again compelled to put back. He informs his owner of his return, accompanying the communication with this remark :—"I must thank God that we are here safe, as there has been much destruction amongst shipping." He begins to grow dispirited lest his owner should think he is not exerting himself, and on the 24th he wrote :—"I am nearly distracted to think I have been here so long." Two days afterwards he writes that he has been driven back with sixty or seventy others, and concludes :—"I hope, please God, we shall soon have a start of wind, so that we may make our voyage." Strong winds detained him in the haven till the middle of December, and on the 21st of that month he was heard of as being in the Downs.

A few days after the receipt of this intelligence, the owner was walking on the beach, or hardway, at the mouth of the river whither the *Ellen* was bound, occasionally looking seaward in anticipation of descrying her, when he happened to see a mast which had been towed in by a smack on the previous tide. He looked at it, and thought it resembled the main-mast of his ship. His suspicions were confirmed by a further examination. There was the mast whole. It had not been cut away for the preservation of the ship. No. The *Ellen* must have struck on some sand and been entirely broken up, or the mast could not have been washed out of her. Nothing has since been heard of her fate. Pieces of wreck, including her name, have been washed ashore, and that is all.

The Devils of Morzine.

Most of our readers have probably spent pleasant hours by the brilliant shores of Lake Leman, and know by experience that every refinement of our latest civilization, with few of its drawbacks, meets the crowd that loiters along the waterside from Geneva to Montreux. Society breakfasts, reads the papers, dresses, dines, and gossips, as well under the shadow of Mont Blanc as in London or Paris, with the added charm of mountain air and scenery. The very comfort, however, of his modern surroundings may set the traveller thinking of the time not so very long ago when the dark mountain district of the Chablais that rises abruptly before him on the Savoy side of the lake was accounted by those learned in such matters, the fatherland of wizards, from whence they descended in swarms to devastate the plains of France and Germany. "Au pays de Savoie," says Lambert Danneau, who wrote in 1579, "et aux environs, les sorciers sont si épais qu'on ne peut les dénicher quoiqu'on s'en fasse une diligente inquisition et encore une plus rigoureuse justice, et qu'on ait brûlé en un an jusqu'à quatre vingts en une seule ville de cette contrée là."

"This is our sorcery!" the modern traveller will say triumphantly as the express dashes by the waterside, drawing its white pennant of steam athwart the sombre slopes of the Jura. If he have in his hours of idleness made acquaintance with any of the Middle Age trials for witchcraft, he may summon the thought of Boguet, that terrible enemy of sorcerers, who laboured to cleanse the Jura range from loupgarous and wizards by flames worse than those of their lord Satan. Three hundred thousand sworn soldiers of the Devil he declared to exist in France, bound to the enemy by infernal spells and pacts. Yet how small a force that would be to meet our modern magicians! How that instrument of bygone superstition would, we think, have recoiled before the marvels of our science! We may have cholera and influenza, but surely we hope the epidemic demonopathy of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries has disappeared before civilization.

Our readers will be startled to hear, nevertheless, that what our ancestors believed to be true demoniacal possession still exists; nor are its phenomena yet explained by science. In face of the classic ground where Gibbon and Rousseau lived, there is a mountain valley about nine hours' walk from the lake side, where "possession" has existed for the last eight years in an epidemic form.

Starting from Thonon, and following the course of the river Dranse, a good walker reaches in five hours the ruins of the Abbey d'Aulph, founded in 1107, and until the last century a prosperous Cistercian com-

munity. Legends say that St. Columba formed the first Christian settlement in the valley, and there stemmed the Burgundian heathendom. Two hours farther of rough char road the parish of Morzine opens in the form of a shell, round which rise high mountains, thickly wooded, that close in the village to the south.

Except that it is out of the way of travellers, there is little difference in the circumstances of Morzine to those of the other Savoyard valleys. The life and customs of its inhabitants are those of similarly isolated districts. Its people are even counted rich in contrast with the people of other communes in Haute Savoie. The parish numbers over two thousand souls, who are chiefly occupied in herding cattle, and are almost nomad in their habits, moving from pasture to pasture with their flocks as summertide ebbs and flows. The principal hamlet is about three thousand feet above sea-level; not so high as Chamouni, but the climate is more severe, for the valley opens to the north, and admits chiefly the "bise," a wind that acts notably on the nervous system wherever it prevails. South winds and heat bring clouds that hang sluggishly about the pine-forests and limestone crags, and keep the valley chill, so that no fruit-trees and few vegetables thrive there; yet the health of the people is not deteriorated. Hardly any fevers prevail; there is no cretinism, and the goitre never assumes large dimensions. Though marriages within degrees prohibited by the Roman Catholic Church are in large proportion, there are hardly any deaf and dumb, or blind or deformed persons. The villagers are intelligent, and their honest, frank, and religious character strikes strangers who come among them. Dr. Constans, the Government commissioner, sent to investigate the epidemic that has now distracted Morzine for eight years, says of the population—"Ils ont un air grave et sérieux qui semble un reflet de l'âpre nature qui les entoure, et qui leur imprime une sorte de cachet particulier qui les ferait prendre pour les membres d'une vaste communauté religieuse; leur existence en effet diffère peu de celle d'un couvent."

There was little then in the circumstances of the place or people except perhaps the dominance of religious ideas to account for the events that startled the medical and religious world of France. The parish priest, though he may have had some old-fashioned notions, had proved himself for many years a good and respectable pastor. Since 1707 there had been no talk of sorcery. Tradition reported that in that year Morzine had been afflicted by spells, but that was an idea of the past. Year after year the young men emigrated to the plains in search of work, and brought back to their homes a fair share of money and new lights. The elders fed their flocks and cultivated their coarse and scanty oats and rye; the women bore many children; the parish was quiet and noted for the intelligence and sober piety of its community. The worst said of the people was, that they loved lawsuits, and were obstinate in their quarrels.

In the spring of 1857, the village being in its usual quietude, Peronne

Tavernier, a child ten years old, was engaged in eager preparation for her first communion. She was exceedingly intelligent and sweet-tempered, and a sort of favour had been made in admitting her sooner than her comrades of the same age, to the mystery of the Eucharist. Religious thoughts occupied her, she says, night and day, and she could speak of little but her joy in the prospect of the event that was at hand. One day, it was the 14th of March, as she came out of church after confession, she saw a little girl fall into the river, and felt strange fright and uneasiness at the sight. A few hours afterwards, as she sat at school, she suddenly sank down on the bench, and had to be carried home, where she remained as one dead for some hours. Three or four days later the same thing happened to her in church, and afterwards, the attacks recurred frequently wherever she might be. Again in April, as she and another child, Marie Plagnat, kept their goats on the hill-side, they were both found insensible, clasped in each other's arms. They were carried home, and after an hour, Peronne awoke and asked for bread, which, however, she could not eat. After that the seizures became frequent, and both children were attacked five or six times a day. Symptoms that strangely impressed the bystanders began to manifest themselves. The little girls in their trance used to raise their eyes to heaven; they sometimes stretched out their hands, and appeared to receive a letter. By turns it seemed to give pleasure and to excite horror. Then they made as if they refolded the letter, and returned it to the invisible messenger. On awakening they declared that they had heard from the blessed Virgin, who had shown them a beautiful paradise. When the missive, as they sometimes averred, came from hell, Peronne used to complain with terror of serpents that were twisted round her hat. Day by day the attacks became more remarkable. The children began to gesticulate, to speak incoherently, to utter oaths, and blaspheme all they had been taught to revere. Their limbs were convulsed, so that three men could not hold Peronne in her fits. In their trances they accused men in the village of having bewitched them. Among other predictions, they announced that two other girls, and Peronne's father would be seized as they were, and that he would die. Their predictions were fulfilled.

The next remarkable case was that of Julieune Plagnat, a girl of fifteen. One day, as she was out, she felt a sudden pain in her right leg, above the knee; she looked for the cause, and found a severe cut across her thigh. A convulsion followed, and from that day she was constantly attacked; she declared herself to be possessed of seven devils, and told their names, which corresponded with the names of men who had died in the neighbourhood. She foretold that there would be many afflicted in the village. Her father relates that, having asked her during one of her attacks how she had cut her leg, a devil answered,—

“ I cut it with my hatchet.”

“ Who—you?”

“ You. I, the woodman.”

For twelve days many remedies were tried to heal the sore, but none succeeded, till at last the devil spoke again.

"Too many things have been done for the girl; do nothing more, and in forty-eight hours the wound will heal." After the time given there was no trace of the wound.

In the beginning of June, Joseph Tavernier, brother of the first child attacked, fell ill. He was a healthy intelligent boy of twelve, and the premonitory symptoms of pain, loss of appetite, and restlessness that frequently warned others, did not show themselves before he was seized. One day he suddenly seemed scared as one astonished; he took a stick, and going into the middle of a stream close by, he beat the water, and turned over the stones for a quarter of an hour. He allowed himself to be led home afterwards without resistance. Another day, returning from his father's funeral, whose death our readers will remember had been predicted by one of the "possessed," the boy had an attack of the nameless disorder that was rapidly becoming epidemic. Under its influence he ran up a pine-tree about eighty feet high. He is said to have turned down the top shoot, and to have stood on it head downwards, singing and gesticulating. Suddenly he recovered his usual consciousness, and terrified at his position he cried out for help. His elder brother called out—"Devil, enter again quickly into this child, that he may be able to come down." At once the attack recommenced, the boy seemed to lose fear, and came down head foremost as a squirrel might do. We have said that his father's death, and that he should die by the malefice of a sorcerer, had been foretold. Tavernier, however, had no fit of actual convulsions. He became melancholy, and complained that when he was hungry and tried to eat, the devil prevented him from lifting food to his mouth. He closed his teeth when others tried to feed him. After three months he became like a skeleton and died.

One by one fresh cases appeared, more or less different in their phenomena, but tending further to representation of demoniacal possession as it is described in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. In eight months twenty-seven persons were under the influence of a disease that the local doctors reported to be abnormal and unaccountable. A physician who went to Morzine, and observed some of the cases that had appeared at this epoch, relates thus an interview that he had with one of the "possessed." We omit some details of his narrative, which are repetitions of Doctor Constant's observations quoted further on.

"The patient was about thirty years old. She was married, and the mother of a family. She was dark in complexion, and of a nervous temperament; her health was good. At the time of my visit she was making preparations for going to Sallenches, a town at some distance, where she was to be sequestered. When I went into her room she was leaning over her baggage. I spoke to her, but she did not reply; soon after her head and upper members became convulsed, and she began to speak in a jerking way. I pinched and pricked her unawares, with a large

needle, as she leant against the table, but she gave no sign of pain. Presently she threw herself on the ground, and rolled about and struck at the furniture and floor with extraordinary violence. Her face was red, her throat swelled ; she seemed suffocated. I tried again if she were sensitive to pain, but with the same result as before. She continued to struggle and cry out.

" 'I am from Abondance' (a neighbouring parish), said the devil by her mouth. ' I was cast into eternal fire for having eaten meat on a Friday. Yes, I am damned,' he continued. '*Mortuus est damnatus.* I must torment the woman, I must drag her with me.' Then, leaping up, with one bound, the woman, or rather the devil, cried out, ' I died by drowning ; the woman must die that way.' She rushed out to throw herself into the river, where once before she had nearly succeeded in destroying herself. Three strong men could hardly hold her back, though in her struggles she seemed to avoid hurting them. At last she desisted, and, leaning against the table, she recommenced her abuse. ' Ah ! bearded wretch of a doctor,' she said, ' you want to drive us out of the woman ; we fear you not with your medicines. Come, we defy you ! See you, wicked unbeliever, what is wanted are prayers, and priests, and bishops, and pious exercises. We are five in this woman. Now there are only two who speak, but it will be very different when she passes into the country where her forefathers are buried, near the church where she knelt innocent : oh, there it is that we will torment her.' The fit left her suddenly, as with the other woman I had seen, and without any pause of transition. She passed her hands through her hair, asked her husband to give her water, and drank a bowl of it. Her replies to my questions were simple and natural. She remembered nothing of what had taken place."

It is curious that every Friday she went to the maire and asked him for bacon, which she ate eagerly and sometimes raw. Our readers will remember that the devil who possessed her had declared himself damned for having eaten meat on Friday.

We do not dwell on the various hallucinations that beset some even of those who were not convulsed among the villagers. There were women who were constantly haunted by a black dog, and a girl declared that she saw a man change into a bird and fly away. Even among bystanders not otherwise affected, there were strange illusions. We do not doubt the good faith with which they aver that the "possessed" hung on the leaves of trees, and passed from branch to branch like birds. We even believe that they did see these wonders, so powerful is the imagination. We doubt not that in their case, as in so many others, belief mastered their senses, and their idea became incarnate to their obedient perceptions. Strange power of the mind that in certain circumstances of great exultation can produce the impressions of sights and sounds and touches and smells that have no material existence ! But, confining ourselves to the narratives of physicians inclined to find a natural cause for the Morzine

disease, there remain enough strange phenomena to explain the terror of the people and the action taken in the first instance by their curé and his assistants, and by even the civil authorities of the commune. We cannot be surprised that the villagers desired, and that their spiritual pastors allowed, the use of exorcisms. Pilgrimages to neighbouring shrines were also tried, and it is said that these remedies were in some cases successful. It is certain that medicine was powerless, and there is curious evidence of increased pain and convulsions when the simplest sedatives, the commonest prescriptions were employed. The people turned eagerly to the best means, as they supposed, of cure for the evil that had beset them. They demanded the rite of exorcism, not only for the "possessed," but for their cattle, their mules, and even their poultry that fell sick. There is a story of a pig that could not by fair or foul means be got to cross the village bridge until a priest came and began the ceremony of exorcism. The stole was laid, as directed, on the animal, which instantly became as docile as his owners wished. Persons at Morzine, worthy of credit, and not believers in demoniacal possession, assert that some cows would not give their milk to women who were affected by the epidemic, while to other hands they yielded plentifully. It is easy to imagine how such incidents, trifling as they seem, added to the public ferment. We have no very detailed account of the progress of the disorder during the languid end of the Sardinian sway in Savoy. The exorcisms practised by the curé were forbidden by Monseigneur Rendu, the bishop of the diocese, a name known to Alpine explorers as that of the first intelligent observer of glacier motion. We can fancy the scientific prelate saying to the priest of Morzine, as, in the 17th century, the Cardinal de Lyon said to Barré, the curé of Chinon, "Ne voyez-vous pas que quand bien même ces filles ne seraient pas possédées elles croiraient l'être sur votre parole?" But the bishop fell ill, the doctors of the neighbourhood confessed their powerlessness, and the Turin Government was deaf to any demand for medical inquiry. The public of Morzine, left to their own devices, determined on having a general exorcism. It was attempted with all the usual ceremonies. The adjurations, sufficiently fearful at any time, were being fervently repeated, when a terrible explosion interrupted the exorcists. The officiating clergy were assailed by blasphemies and invectives, and a scene of convulsions, equal to any recorded during the middle ages, followed.

As might have been feared, the epidemic increased rapidly after this attempt to stay it. The unfortunate people fell into a state of extreme depression, and the few visitors who tried to rouse them from their fear were hooted as "rouges" or unbelievers. Convinced that the state of their wives and daughters resulted from the spells of sorcerers, even the elders of the parish began to wish the punishment of certain persons whom they suspected of pacts with Satan. Four or five men had been denounced by the "possessed," and at last public opinion ran so high that the life of one of the supposed wizards was in continual danger. He was

a fat elderly shoemaker, Jean Berger by name, and by no means represented the ideal sorcerer. However, on one occasion he was hunted for three hours by a mob armed with scythes and axes, and with great difficulty escaped from their fury. A miller was also suspected of malefice, and he was obliged to shut up his mill. Even the most sensible men in the village did not scruple to tell strangers that Morzine would have no peace until two or three magicians were burned on the fair green.

The chief object of dislike was, however, a certain disfrocked priest, who was born at Morzine, and had earned there the worst possible reputation. He was readily fixed on as the chief and instigator of the local sorcerers. It was remembered that on the occasion of an attempt he had made to return to Morzine some time before the "possession" began, he had been refused admission to the parish. He had retreated to Montriond, the next village, and had there begun to build a little chapel by the side of a mountain lake, but he had left it unfinished and had gone to live near Geneva, where he made a suspicious livelihood by selling herbs and minerals from the Savoy mountains. He had been heard to say, on leaving Morzine, "I leave them a thorn in their side which they will not be rid of easily." His death was resolved on by the Morzinois; for, once rid of him, they hoped to turn at its source the flood of evil that had come upon them. To effect their end they tried a spell of counter sorcery that sounds strangely in our modern ears. They disembowelled a dog in the middle of the disfrocked abbé's ruined chapel, and taking out its liver they cut it in seventeen places with a sword. They then buried it with solemn maledictions. In seventeen days they expected that their enemy would be dead, and they would be freed from this legion of devils; but, on the contrary, in seventeen days fresh cases of convulsions broke out with increased violence, and one woman declared that the soul of the abbé had entered into her stomach and there tormented her with grievous clawing.

Meantime France had annexed Savoy, and the great nation, as we know, interested herself in her new province. Dr. Arthaud, a distinguished Lyons physician skilled in mental disease, was commissioned to inquire into the causes and symptoms of the Morzine epidemic. In a very interesting report he recapitulated the facts that we have rapidly sketched, and noted as chiefly remarkable and as certainly existing:—

The abnormal development of muscular force.

The intellectual excitement producing marvellous lucidity of thought and correctness of language.

The cries, blasphemies, and imprecations that increased at the approach of a priest, or at church, or during exorcisms.

The impressions produced at great distances on the senses.

The designation of persons who were said to cause the disease by touch or glance.

The prediction by the sick of the term of their illness.

Their various hallucinations and demoniacal delirium.

The personation of the evil spirits by the patients, who spoke of themselves in the third person always.

Dr. Arthaud examined and analysed cases and tried medicines in vain. He went away leaving no greater consolation to the afflicted souls than that they were a prey to epidemic "hystero-demonopathy."

But what is demonopathy the Morzinois might reasonably have asked? What was it that had come to their valley? Healthy and pious mothers, some with child, some nursing, uttered blasphemies and used language which Wapping would stare at. Respectable girls blasphemed all they believed most sacred. Persons notorious for devotion found that their lips refused to pray, and that through some mysterious influence communion was impossible. Children grew strangely and irrepressibly insolent. A general moral disorganization had changed all the habits of the village. Why had this happened at Morzine? The people of the neighbouring parish were entirely exempt, though its chalets were within a stone's throw of houses that had been visited by this spiritual plague. After Dr. Arthaud's unavailing visit the attention of all who interest themselves in the marvellous was aroused. Believers in "Spiritiam," of whom there are more among all classes in France than we in England imagine, began to make Morzine a theme for their discourses. Men of science were interested in the facts. Writers of history, who have to explain the demonology of the past, caught at this reproduction of its phenomena; and the anxious souls, who seem to think that Christianity needs fresh proofs, were eager to twist the events at Morzine each after his fashion.

France resolved to throw fresh floods of Parisian light on the mountain valley without delay. On the 26th of April, 1861, Dr. Constans, inspector-general of lunatics, arrived at Morzine, determined to restore the due order of a Savoyard commune—

De par *science* défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

He found a hundred and twenty cases of "possession." Immediately he applied himself to observe scientifically sixty-four of them. His account is detailed and interesting, and he successfully disposes of some marvellous stories firmly believed by the people. He does not, however, we think, sufficiently account for what he himself admits, by the physical causes he assigns. He gives us a table of the ages and circumstances of the sixty-four possédées that came under his observation. Of them three were children, sixteen were married, and two were widows. Thirty were of various ages, from twenty-five to fifty-eight. He puts in a different category four men who were attacked by very similar symptoms. Age, therefore, had little to do with the seizures, nor does it appear that any physical circumstances specially determined or alleviated the convulsive attacks. In some cases they were, it is true, preceded by internal pain, by loss of appetite, and digestive disturbance; but the sick imagination of the "possessed" probably produced sensations that could not otherwise be

explained in the excellent state of their physical health. We find a spoonful of water producing "atrocious pain." A woman, who imagined herself bewitched by wine given her by one of the suspected sorcerers, for a year afterwards daily vomited what she declared to be the same wine, nor could she get rid of its taste. The "possession" appears to have caused impressions peculiar to other disorders, but we cannot find that any known disorder determined the "possession." Dr. Constans notes among other phenomena that, if questioned, the diseased persons replied to the thoughts which they attributed to the questions, and to the objections that they foresaw he would make, but their sayings were always in reference to their dominant idea. The spirits whom they supposed spoke by their mouth seem generally to have once tenanted human beings, and sometimes related what they used to do on earth, and what they had since done in hell, &c.

Dr. Constans describes as marvellous their acrobatic feats: he says, "They turn over and over in one bound, and sometimes leaping like a steel spring let go, they fling themselves back, so that head and feet touch the floor together."

"The attack lasts," he continues, "from ten minutes to half an hour; the pulse is not quickened, but rather becomes slow and weak, and the extremities grow cold, notwithstanding the violent blows they strike." The extreme regard to decency of the women, and the absence of the sensual idées which were so general in the witch sabbaths and sorceries of earlier times, is remarkable.

Dr. Constans observed that the insensibility to pain of the convulsed persons was not accompanied by general failure of perception. He, as well as the other physicians who visited them, thrust pins under their nails, and in other sensitive parts of their body, without causing pain. At the same time the organs of sight and hearing were excited in the sick persons to extraordinary keenness. There is a case reported of one, who being at Geneva, whither she had gone in search of cure, heard, at a distance of thirty-five miles at least, the bells of Morzine ringing. She announced that they sounded for the christening of the doctor's baby, without any previous knowledge of the fact. The memory of the "possessed" is also marvellously developed. Many of them were said to have spoken foreign languages—some English, some German, one used the Auvergnat dialect of French, and another was believed to discourse in Arabic. It is probable that they recalled phrases that had been accidentally printed on their brain on some forgotten occasion, and that reproduced themselves during the unnatural condition of the faculties in the "possessed." The invulnerableness of their skin was yet more extraordinary; notwithstanding the severe treatment it received in the attacks of those diseased, it was seldom bruised or cut. A Genevese clergyman assures us that he saw a child ten years' old fall seventeen feet from a loft to the stone-floor below without the slightest injury. Our readers will remember that a similar phenomenon was manifested, in a degree that seemed

incredible, by the celebrated convulsionnaires of St. Médard. It was made a ground of accusation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We do not know that any physiological explanation has been given of it.

The consternation that such facts created at Morzine can be imagined. In vain Dr. Constans—who seems to have been given absolute discretionary power by the French Government—dispersed the worst cases to hospitals in other districts; in vain he overawed the parish authorities by a brigade of forty gendarmes and a detachment of infantry. He tried the effect of their drums and fifes, and caused the curé to be changed, and threatened all who dared to have a fit in public with punishment. Like failure followed each of his measures. During his presence for a few months the disease appeared to smoulder; but the following year fresh and furious outbreaks, suggestive of the presence of yet more cruel devils, took place, to the consternation of the administration, lay and ecclesiastical, of the Haute Savoie. The Morzinois must not, we think, be accused of extraordinary scepticism if they thought that medicine could do little for them; or of weak credulity, if they believed that spiritual means could best meet the spiritual evil. Several cures seem to have been obtained throughout the epidemic by the use of private exorcisms, discouraged, it is true, by the Bishop of Annecy, but practised by the Capuchins of St. Maurice. We can well believe that the fearful adjurations of the Ritual had power to kill or cure a convulsive patient—the whole ceremony is impressive even on the strongest minds; but it is plain that its repetition worked on the devout peasants of Morzine until they seem to have changed their Christian faith for a sort of demon propitiation. In their excitement they demanded a “mission” to revive their courage, and the Annecy authorities permitted one to be held in the afflicted valley during the summer of 1863. As usually happened after any religious ceremony of a public solemn nature, fresh evil followed. Within a week of the sermons and public meetings presided over by the reverend fathers of the mission, eighty cases of convulsions were numbered. The scenes that followed were more dreadful than ever. The newly organized authorities were powerless before an evil that seemed without remedy, and that might be propagated indefinitely through the nervous and credulous population of the Haute Savoie as the renown of it spread.

As soon as the winter snows allowed, the préfet of the department determined to visit the scene of this disorder. In March, 1864, he went to Morzine, determined to try what plain speaking and common sense could do. He called together in a room some of the women subject to convulsions, and exhorted them quietly to try and return to their former pious and regular habits. They listened attentively until, at a given moment, some chance word excited them. They all fell into simultaneous convulsions, and surrounding the préfet, who, our readers will remember, is a very great personage in his department, they assailed him with abuse, oaths, and blasphemies. They kicked and struck him, and made as if they would tear him to pieces, and leaped with unnatural

strength high in the air, foaming at the mouth, and contorting their bodies as no one had ever seen before. The few gendarmes present tried to help their préfet, but they were overborne. A spectator assures us that the women lifted these strong men as they would have lifted infants, and pinned them against the walls of the room, pressing their nails against the flesh of the men's faces. It is singular that no scratch was inflicted by them, notwithstanding the force they used. Their muscles appeared to be perfectly under the control of the will that possessed them; their preternatural strength seemed nicely regulated as the soft touch of a healthy finger. With great difficulty the préfet struggled for a time against his possessed subjects; then, at a bound, one after another they all sprang through a window and disappeared. The préfet made little delay in leaving Morzine. We have heard that the calmest and strongest men received an impression of singular uneasiness after having witnessed an attack of these convulsions. A Roman Catholic priest, well used to common illness, has told us that, having been present at a convulsion in one of the Morzine women who had come to Geneva, he was conscious of unusual nervousness for some hours afterwards.

The experience of the préfet did not deter Monseigneur Maginn, who had succeeded Rendu in the bishopric of Annecy, from visiting Morzine in the course of his pastoral tour. He arrived there in the April following the préfet's discomfiture, with the usual suite of ecclesiastics who attend their chief on such occasions from parish to parish. There had been no confirmation in the valley for some years, and the bishop resolved to try the spiritual effects of that sacrament on some of the "possessed." We may say, by the way, that the excellent and enlightened prelate had, throughout, discountenanced exorcisms. He is a man of great firmness and good sense, and up to this date he is one of those French bishops who have not published, in their dioceses, the late encyclical letter from Rome.

There was of course a full attendance at the high-mass he celebrated. Their bishop was a beloved and venerated object to the people of Morzine, and we can imagine the respect and awe his presence, in full pontifical dress, must have commanded. Much was hoped from the moral effect of his visit and the influence of confirmation; but what that influence produced we translate from the letter of a trustworthy spectator. It was published in the *Union Médicale* of the second of July, 1864:—

"22nd May, 1864.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I went, after all, on the first of May, to see the celebrated 'possessed' at Morzine; and I can assure you I have not lost my time. My imagination could never have conceived so horrible a sight. I was at Morzine at half-past six in the morning. The ceremony began at seven o'clock. I had not been five minutes in the church when a poor young girl fell at my feet in horrible convulsions. Four men could not hold her. She struck the floor with her feet, her hands, and her head as fast as the roll of a drum. Then another was raised, and again another. The church became a perfect hell. Nothing

was heard but cries, blows, oaths, and blasphemies, that made one's hair stand on end. It was the bishop's entrance that particularly set all the people agog. Blows with the fist, kicks, spitting, horrible contortions, handfuls of hair and caps flung about, torn clothes, bleeding hands, met everywhere my ears and eyes. The most frightful moments were at the elevation of the host, and at the benediction of the holy sacrament after vespers, as well as when the bishop first appeared. It was so dreadful that the bystanders were all in tears. The victims of the disease, above a hundred in number, seemed to fall into simultaneous convulsions without any previous warning. The noise was perfectly infernal. Within a radius of two yards I counted eleven. The greater number were young girls and women from fifteen to thirty years old. There was a child of ten, five or six old women, and two men. The bishop confirmed some of them, whether they would or no. As soon as he came in front of them they were seized; but by the help of the gendarmes and some men who assisted he put his hands on them, even in the midst of their fearful maledictions. 'Damned carrion of a bishop,' they said, 'why dost thou come to torment us?' They tried to strike and bite him and to tear off his episcopal ring (which we have heard was actually trampled under foot). They spit in his face; but it was noteworthy that when the bishop touched their heads in confirmation they sank down, and remained in a stupor that seemed like deep sleep. During the sermon, when any one was seized with a convulsion, the bishop stopped, and making the sign of the cross, he said, 'In nomine Christi tace et obmutesce.' The effect was invariably good. Near me was a young and pretty woman of eighteen. She had been married a year, and had been a mother for two months. After having been confirmed, lying in the arms of her father, her brother, and her husband, who all wept bitterly, she cried out, 'Ah, damned carrion of a bishop, thou makest me depart. I who was so happy in this body on the earth. How dreadful to have to return to hell.' Then, after a pause, 'And I, also, I must go. I must leave this fair body, where I was so well off. But when I go, I have five more, and among them an old devil. It is not to-day that they will depart.' I took the woman by her hand, and questioned her in Latin and other languages; but she did not reply. The brigadier of the gendarmes having come forward to stop her talking, 'Ah, carrion of a brigadier,' she cried, 'I know thee, thou art an unbeliever. Thou art a —— Thou art mine.' The brigadier turned pale, and fell back. The gendarmes were all so terrified that every moment they made the sign of the cross.

"I stayed at Morzine until Monseigneur left, that is to say, till half-past six in the evening. The poor bishop was utterly dispirited. Two or three 'possédées' were brought to him in the sacristy, but he could do nothing. On my return I found one by the side of the road. I questioned her also in foreign language, but she got angry, and replied by a handful of gravel, which she flung in my face, telling me that I only went once a year to mass, and that I was a busybody."

The complete failure of episcopal influence threw the Government back on the help of medical science. Dr. Constans had, since his first visit, published a report, in which he held out hopes of cure if his advice were strictly followed. He was again commissioned to do what he could for Morzine. Armed with the powers of a dictator he returned there, and backed by a fresh detachment of sixty soldiers, a brigade of gendarmes and a fresh curé, he issued despotic decrees, and threatened lunatic asylums, and in any case deportation for the convulsed. He fined any person who accused others of magic, or in any way encouraged the prevalent idea of supernatural evil. He desired the curé to preach sermons against the possibility of demoniacal possession, but this order could not well be carried out by even the most obedient priest.

The persons affected with fits were dispersed in every direction. Some were sent to asylums and hospitals, and many were simply exiled from the Chablais. They are not allowed to revisit even for a day their homes except by very special favour. The existing health of the exiles is, of course, not well known, but we have heard of many who have attacks even now when they are far from Morzinc. Four or five who were unfortunately kept together in an Annecy hospital, set on the chaplain, a priest who attempted to exorcise them, and ill-treated him after the fashion in which they had dealt with his bishop.

Whether fear has helped to stay the spiritual plague, as undoubtedly fear helped to produce it, remains to be proved; at present the urgent pressure put by the French Government on the people of Morzine seems to have scotched the snake. There have been no cases of convulsion for four months. The soldiers have been withdrawn, much regretted by the villagers, to whom they made themselves as agreeable as Dr. Constans hoped they would. As we write the brigadier of the gendarmes is on his way back from Grenoble, whither he had gone to be decorated for his courage and good conduct. The maire and the special Government commissioner find their time hang heavy for lack of fresh cases of the "hystero-demonopathy." Visitors to the place, curious of information, are, we think, wisely discouraged; quacks and charlatans are not allowed admission to the commune. Let us hope that this summer may see no fresh outbreak of a disorder so dreadful, in that it appears to "kill the soul" even more than it weakens the body.

We need not point out the salient facts of our narrative, or discuss the various theories that have been invented to account for them. We have described no incident that cannot be compared and measured with phenomena recorded in earlier centuries. It is impossible not to see the resemblance of the Morzine epidemic with the demonopathy of the sixteenth century, and with the history of the Jansenist and Cevennes convulsionnaires. Some of the facts we have related are observed in the state of hypnotism or nervous sleep with which physicians are familiar. The hallucinations of which we have given some instances, are too common to astonish us. But the likeness of this epidemic to others that have been

observed, does not account for its symptoms. The resemblance of its phenomena to some already witnessed does not, after all, explain them. Can physiologists give the reasons for an insensibility that is accompanied by such remarkable development of muscular energy? Can they account for a preternatural acuteness of the senses; can any physical explanation tell us why the moral marvel exists of virtue turning to vice, and piety to hatred of God?

We have repeatedly inquired of persons familiar with the events at Morzine, if there could be any want of good faith in the patients whose symptoms contradicted received medical experience. With one accord it is agreed that there is no sort of acting among any of those afflicted. Nothing can be more terribly real than the trouble that has befallen them.

The medical opinions that have as yet been pronounced on the Morzine evil, seem to us remarkably vague. This harlequin malady unites symptoms of hysteria, epilepsy, mania, and gastric disturbance; and yet some principal features accompanying usually each of these diseases are wanting. The excellent health of the "possessed" between their seizures seems to point out that there is no great physical mischief at work. A physician reports of the women whose cases he observed, "They were fat and fresh-looking, enjoying to the full their physical and moral faculties. It was impossible on seeing them to imagine the existence of the slightest illness.

Had we space, it would be interesting to trace the strange influence of credulity on our perceptions. We have related facts that have been solemnly attested by grave persons of good faith at Morzine. Let not our readers be startled if we readily admit that such of those facts as trench on the supernatural, might be proved on analysis never to have had any existence except in the minds of those who believed they witnessed them. But "possession" is not more curious as a disease than the existence of epidemic illusions, such as we believe broke out at St. Médard among the Camisards of the Cevennes, and now at Morzine, when a whole population testifies to marvels. Has this frequent disorder of human perception been sufficiently examined? We do not set down those who believe in spiritist and other marvels as knaves or fools, but as victims of a very common disturbance of the faculties that we think deserves serious attention from all interested in the search of truth. We need not the Morzine evidence to remind us that nothing is less certain than any given observation, unless the organs of observation be specially sound and in high training; and to accept any fact as certain we must have other witness to it than that of our senses. The Chablais epidemic leads us into questions that concern us deeply, for it not only exhibits curious phenomena in those actually convulsed, but it also warns us of the remarkable liability to error of our perceptions when they are swayed by foregone conclusions.

Misogyny.

BOCACCIO, in painting the almost ineffable horrors of the famous plague at Florence, could find no horror surpassing or even equalling that involved in the nearly universal abandonment of the malady-stricken husbands by the terror-stricken wives. In his mind, this was the most appalling feature of the terrible visitation. How great, then, the worth of the conjugal tie in the estimation of the author of the *Decameron*! How large the value he assigned to the tender offices of woman! We turn to the *Decameron* itself, in which we find limned at full length a model wife, according to the writer's notions of such a piece of perfection. Such a real domestic treasure, we are informed, is "young and beautiful in her person, mistress of her needle, *no man-servant waiting better at her master's table, no merchant better versed in accounts!*" Well might he deplore the flight at a season of calamity of personages so invaluable as the one thus described, so exemplary each in attending to the wants of her master and his guests during their festal hours, and discharging besides the onerous and important duties attached to the dignified office of maître d'hôtel. At the approach of the plague the menial underlings fled by scores; but the calamity only reached its height when the wife, the chief menial of all, the excellent attendant on the dinner-table, the accountant so useful in managing the household finances, imitated the base example, and took to her heels as well.

But do not let us fall foul of Bocaccio until we have ascertained thero have not been others who—and perhaps in a less complimentary form—have depreciated quite as much, not to say a great deal more, the merits of womankind. Goldastus tells a comical story of a certain abbot who held women and apples in equal aversion; in aversion so great as that when travelling, if at any inn he had purposed to abide he met with either, on no consideration would he stay, but insisted on proceeding forthwith on his journey. This reverend father, troubled, it is clear, with none of Bishop Colenso's scruples, could not forgive Eve her delinquency, and hated her daughters for her sake, while the very instrument of her temptation shared in his abhorrence. However, as his priestly condition compelled him to celibacy, the ladies of his time could afford to meet his despicable prejudice with derisive contempt. The memory of Eve encounters much harder usage at the hands of the Talmudists, who deny altogether she was created out of the rib of Adam, assigning to her an origin infinitely less honourable. If we are to credit the Rabbinical writers, the rib, after having been extracted from the side of the father of all living, was suffered to remain unused for a time, and

excited the cupidity of a mischievous, malignant monkey, who watching his opportunity, snatched up the prize and hurried off with it at express speed. The angel, whose business it was to have watched the treasure, and who was unfortunately caught napping, hastened at a terrible pace in pursuit of the audacious thief, but in vain ; the pilferer got clear off with his booty, leaving, however, his ungainly caudal appendage in the hard grasp of his pursuer : it was out of his tail, and not the Adamite rib, that, in the belief of the Jewish doctors, Eve was manufactured.

No marvel, then, that the Jew Henderson met with in Russia should morning, noon, and night, have returned thanks to Heaven he had not been born a woman. Few would like to trace up their pedigree to a monkey ; still fewer to that ungainly member of his person to which the Talmudists referred the origin of Eve. The philosophers of antiquity, one and all, held woman in slender esteem ; but it should be remembered that those who saw in her only a development of a fish, considered also that man, her hereditary lord and master, had himself also an ichthyc origin, and that his real progenitors were finny denizens of the great deep. Heretics in the early ages of the Church were found who dogmatically denied to woman the possession of the attributes of humanity, and affirmed that in reality she was nothing better than a brute beast,—having, like some brute beasts, such as the chimpanzee and the gorilla, a certain hideous resemblance to mankind, with whom she had really nothing else in common. Such prevalence did this monstrous doctrine acquire, that, in the fifth century, a council of the Church was summoned at Macon, formally to condemn it and anathematize its supporters. But even in the council were divines to be found who gave to the abominable heresy a sort of qualified approval, contending, upon what grounds it is useless now to conjecture, that the salvation which came by the cross was limited to man alone, and that for woman Christ did not die. It was only after long and anxious debate, this pestilent dogma received its fitting censure. St. Augustine's notions on the matter may be inferred from the singular opinion which he maintains in his famous treatise *De Civitate Dei*, where he contends that, at the resurrection, womankind will be wanting, but that all who rise will rise as males. The great logomach of Hippo, it is known, was largely infected with the spurious Platonism of his time, and his judgment on this subject was probably influenced in some degree by the teaching of Plato, that man was created double at first, and that the sexes being separated, afterwards, by an irresistible impulse, were ever attempting to restore their primitive union ; woman, since her elimination from man, having become inferior not only to him, but even to the bestial creation itself. Aristotle, whom those misogynists the Jews used to claim as a Jew—an honour, we will undertake to say, he never thought of, and never would have desired—is still more severe on the sex. Woman, in his belief, was a mistake altogether. She ought never to have been permitted to disgrace the earth with her presence. She was

an incomplete, unfinished, production altogether ; a bungled piece of goods ; a discredit to mankind amongst whom she was cast. She was worse than useless ; she was positively mischievous. On certain days, if she was abroad, the atmosphere became tainted on her appearance, liquors became corrupted, the milk curdled, the cream acquired the flavour of verjuice, the melon withered, the mirror was sullied in reflecting her visage, sterility followed her footsteps, animals became mad on her approach, and the sight of her called forth a plentiful crop of snakes. Much of this rhodomontade certainly is due not to Aristotle himself, but to his followers ; still, his hostility to woman is an ascertained fact, and his disciples only improved on the doctrine of their master.

Amauri, a famous doctor of Paris, who flourished at the beginning of the twelfth century, was of these disciples the most renowned, and drew down on himself the censure of the papal chair, then filled by Innocent III. His own bishop, scandalised at his heterodoxy, convoked a synod and summoned him to attend and receive the sentence it should pass on him ; but Amauri died before the synod had concluded its deliberations. Resolved not wholly to be cheated of their prey, the assembled fathers decreed that the corpse of the scandaliser of woman should forthwith be exhumed, and publicly dragged, with every mark of indignity, through the principal streets of Paris—a decree which was executed in its fulness, greatly, no doubt, to the satisfaction of the fair Parisians, who must have felt their wrongs revenged, and their rightful position in the order of beings effectually vindicated by the extremely decorous proceeding. Amauri's death, and his post-mortem punishment, did not, however, put an end to his heresy. He left behind him numerous and devoted believers in his doctrines, and many of these, by order of the Council of Paris, were brought to the stake in 1210 and duly roasted alive, that men should know the fair sex was not to be depreciated with impunity. These Parisian theologians were decidedly men of gallantry, as behoved them ; and had Goldastus's abbot lived in their days, they would, without doubt, have subjected him to the *baptême de feu*, and very likely, with that grim pleasantry which used sometimes to characterize ecclesiastics addicted to the use of the faggot in the suppression of condemnable opinions, they would have roasted one of his detested apples along with him.

But conspicuous as was Parisian gallantry on this interesting occasion, it must not be forgotten that that antique code, the *coutume de Paris*, recognized that most ungallant dogma, *du côté de la barbe est la puissance* : a dogma involving such an indignity to womanhood at large as to provoke the indignation of Madame de Thou, mother of the famous historian, who was accustomed to declare, *qu'elle aurait volontiers donné la moitié de son bien pour pouvoir être homme*—a dogma worthy only of Mahomedan barbarians, who look upon women with contempt and beats with reverence. It is their conviction, as we read in the memoirs of the Chevalier d'Avoieux, that every separate hair of *la barbe* has an angel detached for the sole and especial purpose of its protection ; and so,

when your Mussulman combs his beard and some hairs chance to be abstracted in the process, he considerately breaks each eliminated filament, and carefully buries it, in order that its guardian angel may at once understand it has no further occasion for his services. What marvel, then, that woman with beardless chin (though Margaret of Parma boasted the possession of a majestic beard, and attributed to its influence much of the success of her administration of the Netherlands) should be held in low esteem where the beard was believed an object of angelic care and solicitude. Van Helmont, as we know, viewed the matter in a different light, and considered that the beard was given to Adam after the fall by way of punishment, in order that he should look as much like a beast as possible.

The verdict of mankind in general has, however, gone in favour of the beard, and beardless woman has been the victim of the unfortunate prejudice. It had something to do, perhaps, with the opinion, long entertained and supported by authorities of the greatest eminence, that women are naturally given to sorcery, and that a familiarity with the magical arts is far more common among their sex than that of the men. Witches, say the misogynists, are infinitely more numerous than wizards, and they support their position by citing the testimony of Pierre Delamere, of Bordeaux, the most celebrated writer on demonology which the sixteenth century produced, fertile as it was in writers of that description. And Jean Bodin, the renowned publicist, certifies to the same effect, both these demonographs concurring in the statement that, when once a woman comes to an understanding with the devil, the most disastrous consequences may be expected. It was for this reason that, in early times in England, the few married clergy were viewed by the mass of the people with mixed fear and dislike. Being married, it was supposed that, through the agency of their wives, they were peculiarly subject to demoniac influence, and therefore disqualified properly to teach and guide their flocks. Archaeologists, by scores, have been puzzled to explain the notion which long haunted the public mind in this country that it anguished ill for a matrimonial alliance if the bride, at the wedding, did not weep profusely. But the *rationale* of the opinion will not remain doubtful if we recollect that, according to the best authorities, no witch can shed more than three tears in succession, and those she can shed only from the left eye. The copious weeping of the new-made wife thus gave assurance to the husband and his friends that she at least had not previously plighted her troth to Satan, and was, in spite of the proclivities of her sex, no conjuror. In after-times, the misogynists appear to have considered tears themselves as instruments whereby sorceresses strove to exercise their diabolical arts, and realize their selfish purposes. In the drama we often find reflected the popular sentiment, and so it may not be out of place here to remark that, in an old play, preserved in Dodsley's collection, a painted cloth—one of those economical substitutes for tapestry with which our ancestors used to cover the nakedness of their walls (see II. Hen. IV.,

act ii. sc. i.)—is represented as having inscribed on it these slanderous lines :—

Trust not a woman when she cries,
For she'll pump water from her eyes
With a wet finger, and in faster showers
Than April when he rains down flowers.

Although one of the *dramatis personæ*, who is certainly no misogynist, very sensibly observes, on this doggrel, “Ay but, George, that painted cloth is worthy to be hanged for lying,” there is no doubt it gave faithful expression to that vulgar prejudice against womankind to which, with all their mock gallantry, our ancestors were prone.*

Whilst on the subject of tears, we may remark that the antipathy of the Jewish professors to women is oddly enough evinced in one of their glosses on the Book of Genesis. In this they contend that Abraham shed but few tears on the death of Sarah, inasmuch as she had grown old, and that, as a consequence, he was not altogether sorry to get rid of her. That his tears were scanty, they conclude from the fact that the letter *Caph*, which is used in describing his weeping, is a remarkably small letter, and, being a small letter, could only be used with propriety in the description of a small thing; and, accordingly, the thing described being the weeping, that weeping must have been small, as the letter certainly is! In their own peculiar logic, these Judaical casuists would beat Suarez to shivers! Their misogyny here exhibits itself in an aspect more than ordinarily revolting, for it discovers a repugnance not merely to a sex, but especially to that portion of a sex rendered venerable by age, and whose very weakness should most powerfully attract our sympathies. It is significant that the reverence the Jews habitually pay to gray hairs, and which forms a conspicuous element in the national character, should be suspended when they shadow the brow of a woman. Read what that hearty “true-born Englishman,” Daniel Defoe, writes about old women in his *Protestant Monastery*. “If any whimsical or ridiculous story is told, ‘tis of an old woman. If any person is awkward in his business or anything else, he is called an old woman, forsooth! Those were brave days for young people, when they would swear the old ones out of their

* An imaginative contributor to the *Antiquarian Repertory* professes to have discovered somewhat singular evidence of the superior gallantry of our early ancestors over their immediate successors, and the revival of a respect for woman in a still later age. “I have observed,” he says, “that on most of the engraved brass-plates laid over gravestones, where they represent a man and his wife, among the ancient ones, the lady takes the right hand of her husband; but in those of more modern date, the husband lies on the right of his wife.” The “reason why” of this change he explains by adding that “when the high honours paid to the fair sex began to go out of fashion, the husbands seized the opportunity to assert their superiority, and their wives were removed from the place of honour which the male sex for many years maintained.” Subsequently, as he tells us, this outrageous wrong was, in some degree, redressed, seeing that “all public addresses to a mixed assembly of both sexes, till sixty years ago, commenced, ‘Gentlemen and Ladies!’ while, at present (1808), it is ‘Ladies and Gentlemen!’”

lives, and get a woman hanged or burnt, only for being a little too old, and as a warning to all ancient persons who should dare to live longer than the young ones think convenient." Singular, indeed, it is, that these scribes, conversant, no doubt, with their country's history, should have forgotten that "when," to use the language of Alfred de Vigny, "there were no brave men in Israel, Deborah arose!"

Earlier than the days of Martial down to the very present, the fool's sneer, the scoff of "shallow jesters and rash bavin wits" have been levelled at woman's vanity, her love of dress and luxury, and preference of outward beauty to inward excellence. Lycoris, with her tinted cheeks —rouge-pots have been found at Herculaneum; Ægle, with her false teeth; Polla burying her wrinkles beneath a layer of bean-paste; Galla retiring to rest, having deposited her upchased charms and artificial loveliness in a hundred boxes:—gibes and taunts like these have gratified the misogynist's spite in many an age. It is in vain to remind the snarlers that, from the remotest antiquity, the idea of goodness has always associated itself with that of beauty, and that when the sculptor's chisel and the painter's brush have been called on to image vice and wickedness, they have ever represented them under the guise of physical deformity and outward hideousness. To those conversant with the history of art, it is unnecessary to add that, both in classical and mediæval times, the artist, in representing evil demons varying in the degree of their malignity and diabolism, ever figured the evilest spirit as the most ugly. In this, surely we discover a sufficient reason that woman should not be indifferent to her personal appearance. When Baptista Porta, one of the most learned men of his time, had to seek a patron to whom to dedicate his greatest work, he chose the Cardinal J. D'Este, and chose him solely because of his beauty. See in what a sarcastic spirit Paradin, in his *Chronique de Savoie*, is careful to inform the world, to whom it mattered not one jot, that a certain Greek duchess of Vienna was not only so dainty as to suck her food through tubes of gold, but so anxious for her complexion as to bathe herself frequently in dew! The harsh Earl of Shrewsbury was content enough to play the gaoler to Mary Queen of Scots, but was evidently annoyed at her favourite practice of taking a bath of wine. In what a tone of grave irony does Sir Francis Knollys write to the secretary Cecil—men with hearts hard as the nether-millstone—how the poor Queen, a fugitive from her rebellious subjects, and a suppliant of her deadliest enemy, concerned herself on her arrival at Carlisle with the important matter of her head-dress, how she "prayed Mystres Marye Ceaton" for being "the fynest busker, that is to say, the fynest dresser of a woman's heade or heare, that is to be seen in any countrey," and how, "every other day hitherto she hathe a new devyce of head-dressing!" We find a certain celebrated lady—Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, second Duchess of Orleans—affectedly depreciating her own outward presentment, but who believes she was in earnest? Writing in 1718, she thus pictures her person, "I

must certainly be monstrous ugly. I never had a good feature. My eyes are small, my nose short, my lips broad and thin. These are not materials to form a beautiful face. Then, I have flabby, lank cheeks, and long features which suit ill with my low stature. My waist and legs are equally clumsy. Undoubtedly, I must appear to be an odious little wretch." This enumeration of defects is too minute and exact to permit us to believe the writer accounted them as such, and the catalogue appears to us an elaborate piece of detestable affectation. Olivia, in the "schedule" of her charms (*Twelfth Night*, act i. scene v.), is equally depreciatory; but Olivia had had too recent proof of the potency of her beauty to doubt its reality, and had, certainly, at the time she spoke, no intention that its reality should be doubted by her handsome auditor. Was this Bavarian princess one whit more candid?

Women's fondness for gauds and finery has not, of course, escaped the notice of censorious criticism; and the instances of its malice in this direction are as numerous as the leaves at Valombrosa. Harpsfield, a sour old monk and chronicler, that is a recorder of incredible legends and monstrous lies, tells a pretty tale of a certain saint, one St. Ethelreda, better known as St. Audrey, who died of a swelling in the throat, and piously refers the source of her malady to her wickedness in early life, when she was mightily given to the wearing of smart necklaces. The crabbed old priest did not know that, originally, the necklace, or collar, was only a mark of rank or distinction, and afterwards was worn as an amulet or charm against disease, and that it should have brought on the mumps, as he pretends, is nothing better than a gigantic fib. Selden, a thorough misogynist, as became his Puritanical humour, and as his *Uxor Hebraica* sufficiently shows, has his sling at the sex, remarking that "it is reason a man that will have a wife should be at the charge of her trinkets, and pay all the scores she sets on him. He that will keep a monkey, it is fit he should pay for the glasses he breaks." Bunyan said nothing worse than this when he disabled woman's judgment by the remark—"Such a thing may happen as that the woman, not the man, may be in the right, but ordinarily it was otherwise." Even Herrick, the English Catullus, whose amatory effusions resemble honey sweetened with sugar when characterizing womankind, could say nought better of it than that it is a sorry mixture of good and bad, gold and dross, worthiness and worthlessness, for so are his words to be interpreted:—

Learn of me what woman is,
Something made of thread and thrumme,
A mere batch of all and some!

S h u p.

It happened to the writer of this article, not very long ago, to find himself in the back parlour of a celebrated dog-fancier on the Surrey side of the river. His object was to purchase for a country friend the ugliest, and crossest, and smallest bull-dog that could be got for money. The proprietor of the establishment, however, while professing to know exactly the kind of dawg that was required, admitted with great candour that he had none such in his possession. Propitiated by his sincerity, we consented to order from the bar—for he kept a public-house—two glasses of brown fluid, of the same price as sherry, one of which we devoted to wishing Mr. Napper health, happiness and prosperity. He sipped sparingly the other in acknowledgment of our politeness; and we then fell into conversation. Among the other claims to distinction which our host possessed, he evidently ranked none higher than his intimacy with the celebrated Mr. Calcraft; a friendship which seemed to have had its origin in the remarkable circumstance that the first pair of "Balmoral boots" which ever clasped the trim ankles of Mrs. Napper were fashioned by that illustrious artist. Rejoicing at the opportunity thus presented to us of learning something of that public functionary's tastes, habits, and manners in private life, we pressed the subject into detail. Mr. Napper disclosed to us many particulars of his friend's life and character which seemed to show that he was by nature of a peaceful and unoffending disposition, but which do not concern the purpose of the present article. But a trait which does concern it, and one on which Mr. Napper laid great stress, was this: that the carnilex was "excellent company," and that you might drink with him a whole evening without discovering his profession. We were a good deal struck with the observation, though less surprised at the reticence of the gentleman in question than at Mr. Napper's appreciation of it. For it was quite clear that he did not connect Mr. Calcraft's habitual abstinence from professional topics with the unpleasant nature of his avocations. Far from this—he evidently saw in it but the modesty of a great man, and the taste of a well-bred one, who dislikes talking about himself, or making much of such little services as he may have been able to render to the State. Mr. Calcraft, in short, though under strong temptation so to do, never "talked shop," and herein set an example to the world, on which it is our present purpose to moralize.

It is often said that he must be a very stupid man who cannot talk well about himself, and the truth which is expressed in this saying is the best excuse there is for your ordinary egotist. And where half-a-dozen people of different professions are assembled together, the record of each

man's personal experience is not unlikely to form the best kind of conversation of which the company is capable. Again, of course, when all the individuals of the party are of the same profession, it is only natural they should talk about it, and their talk will bore nobody. But when people denounce the habit of talking shop, they mean something different from either of these supposed cases. They are thinking of the position of some one or two unfortunate outsiders in a circle of professional men who persist in keeping the conversation to their own peculiar interests, either careless if the strangers are entertained with it or not, or else taking for granted that what is interesting to themselves must of necessity be so to other people.

To suffer under this infliction is one of the commonest of the evils to which humanity in society is heir. Who does not know the symptoms which announce its coming? who has not made, in his own person, frantic but futile efforts to arrest its course? Say you are at a dinner-party where the host and a majority of the male guests are barristers. While the ladies are present, some attempt at general conversation will, of course, be made, and, in proportion to the ability and general information of the company, will be successful. But no sooner have they disappeared, and the host bustling about towards the fire, has observed that it is a cold night, than Jones sees his chance even in this innocent remark, and informs his neighbour that he hopes it will be warmer to-morrow, when he has to start on circuit. *Quid plura?* At that magic word every tongue is unloosed. Feebly you murmur something about the hard winter, or the skating, or the hunting. Your words are drowned in copious reminiscences of the bar mess, circuit jokes, and judicial eccentricities. The demon of "shop" has taken the bit between his teeth, and you might as well attempt to make an angry woman hear reason as to divert the conversation into other channels. The reader will, of course, understand that we are very far from meaning that barristers when they form the majority of a company *always* conduct themselves in this way; we merely mean to recall by the reproduction of a few of its salient features what is the result when they do. Again, take a party of clergymen. You try to adapt yourself to your company by asking the reverend gentleman opposite, who looks as if he would like to talk, whether he has read the Bishop of Oxford's last speech? Before he has time to reply, the word "bishop" has acted like a charm, and roused the train of ideas ever uppermost in clerical minds. "Have you heard," shouts a fresh-coloured curate, from one end of the table to the other, "what our bishop said to little Chapters the other day about that new schoolroom he wants to build at Puddlestow?" In vain you try back to him of Oxford; that prelate has excommunicated you for the remainder of the evening. Idly you endeavour to make your tormentors turn and rend each other by raising the Colenso controversy: in such a company as that there will probably be no readers, and but one opinion, of the work in question. No, it is no use; and you resign yourself for the next two hours to mild chaff of the diocesan—to the politics of the vestry and the schoolroom—to the deep-dyed depravity of Groggins, who won't

make his waggoner go to church—and the still darker wickedness of Gallons, who takes his wife to the public-house.

In exclusively rural neighbourhoods, where the guests are chiefly agricultural, the same nuisance may be looked for. At the very first pause in the conversation, after the men are left alone, is sure to come the ominous question, "At Oatsbro' last Wednesday, Mr. Mangold?" "Yes, Mr. Wurzel, I were; I didn't see you." "No, I had to look at some beast. Do you know what old Furrows got for his barley?" And so on to the end of the third bottle of port. It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Military shop about "knapsack drill" or Miss Velox; sporting shop; theatrical shop; even medical shop, the least offensive perhaps of any, are all pretty much alike in this one common feature: that all deal with the mere mechanical details of the respective professions which evoke them, and not with those higher interests which make all professions akin, and appeal to feelings and opinions which are common to mankind.

If we turn this subject round, and look at it from the other side, we shall get a still clearer view of the true nature of the offence. Why should this kind of talk be called "shop"? Doubtless the epithet was given to it, in the first instance, as simple slang. But is there no deeper propriety in the application of it than belongs to a mediocre witticism? Does not the reader now see that the word "shop," as applied to conversation, bears exactly the same relation to a higher order of professional discourse, as the shop proper bears to commerce in its best sense? There is no disgrace in keeping a shop. It is a creditable and useful occupation. Neither is there anything abstractedly unworthy in the barrister's talk about Mr. Baron Boozer's last joke, or what a mess poor Mr. Duffin made of his first brief. The bishop's reply to Mr. Chapters, and the iniquities of Groggins and Gallons, may be discussed with much practical advantage by an assemblage of clergymen. The price of Mr. Furrows' barley is instructive to the farmer. And knapsack and crinoline mix the *utile* with the *dulce* very properly for the youthful subaltern. There is nothing for either lawyer, parson, soldier, or farmer to be ashamed of in discussing these respective subjects. But what they should be ashamed of is the intrusion of these topics upon persons not conversant with professional technicalities. And they deserve the ridicule which has been very freely showered upon them, from all time, if they imagine that every one outside of their own profession is dying with curiosity to know something of its common everyday routine.

Professional conversation of every kind has within itself the capacity of rising into a higher region, in which it becomes more or less catholic, and touches, as we have said, emotions common to mankind. But nobody ever dreams of calling this kind of conversation "shop." Law, divinity, the military art, medicine, even agriculture have, for their final causes, objects in which the whole human race is interested; and are, when engaged upon a large scale of action, concerned with those phenomena which are the fuel of romance and poetry. The description of a

battle by one who took part in it, or a criticism, say of the American campaigns by some general of recognized ability ; such professional experiences as the "diary of a late physician ;" or a clergyman's recital of deathbed scenes and strange confessions, are as interesting to one man as to another ; and to call them shop would be absurd. These things illustrate each profession in its great ends, not in its petty means ; as it exists for the good of the world, not as it exists for the profit or amusement of individuals ; in a character, finally, which is interesting to all men, and which may, therefore, always speak without fear of being tiresome.

Having thus divided professional talk into the particular and the technical, which is shop, and the general and architectonic, which is not, it remains only to apply this distinction to a subject-matter we have not yet introduced, namely, literature. It is needless to say that none are more alive than literary men to the abomination of "shop" in other people. May we be allowed to add that they are proportionably blind to it in themselves.

Literature has this advantage over all other professions, that the catholic element in it is much larger than in any of them. It appeals to the whole world in a way in which neither theology, nor law, nor even warfare ever can. These, indeed, are but the raw materials of Literature. She is above them all and includes them all. What was said of philosophy—*Philosophia non est doctrina sed omnium doctrinarum mater*—we may say of literature in its relation to other professions as sources of conversational entertainment. These become interesting to the lay listener exactly in proportion to the wit, eloquence, or dramatic power with which they are handled ; in other words, in proportion to the degree in which the language employed shows the presence of those qualities which constitute the excellence of literature.

With this superiority over all rivals in the extent of that higher level over which she can range without descending to the purely technical and mechanical, it might be expected, perhaps, that the followers of literature should be less tainted with the vice of "shoppiness" than the members of any other profession. Yet that such is not the case is evident not only to all persons who mix much in literary society, but to such as do but read the daily papers. It is to be feared, indeed, that what ought to have been the safeguard of men of letters, has in reality been the occasion of their falling ; we mean this imperial character of Literature, which has seduced them into fancying that the world may be as curious to know the most trivial details which relate to her, as the vulgar are to learn who blacks an emperor's boots, or designs a princess's bonnet. But the truth is, that the popular inquisitiveness, even in regard to these last particulars, has dwindled much of late years ; while with regard to literature, if it exists at all, it is literary men who have created it for their own special profit and advantage. But whether or not it be conceded that the appetite for this kind of "shop" is general enough to make the gratification of it profitable, it cannot be maintained that the office of purveyor is honourable. If the demand exist, no matter by whom

created, we do not go so far as to say that the supply of it is a discreditable pursuit in the abstract. It stands in just the same relation to good literature as "knapsack drill" to the campaign of Salamanca; as Groggins and Gallons to theology, as Boozer and Duffin to jurisprudence. If it really is so, that the world, which is so intolerant of all other shop, does like literary shop, we cannot, we say, blame those who talk and write it, any more than we can the followers of any other undignified but honest calling. It is not, strictly speaking, the loftiest position in the world to be taking down the guests names at a nobleman's party; but it has to be done, to please a certain portion of the public; and though people might laugh at Jenkins, they never seriously blamed him.

But the case is somewhat different if all this time the writers of literary shop have been mistaken, and the world is profoundly indifferent to the details which these gentlemen discuss. The exact truth on this point it would be difficult to arrive at. Common sense, however, would indicate—if we allow that to be our guide—that the public interest in such matters must be confined to the case of great men. No doubt, if the world hears that a new magazine is coming out, all who care for the fact care also to know that a Mr. Thackeray, or a Mr. Dickens, or a Lord Macaulay is going to write for it. But why they should care to be told that Brown, Jones, and Robinson, whose names they have never even heard of, are going to be contributors, we cannot tell. Mr. Thackeray himself has described very well in *Pendennis* the class of men to whom Brown, Jones, and Robinson belong; established literary workmen, known to the profession and the trade; scholars perhaps and gentlemen; men who write the greater part of what the public read in the reviews and newspapers, but who are themselves unknown, and care very little to be known. Is the world at large, then, really anxious to penetrate their obscurity, or is it persuaded, upon reading their names in print, that these are certain distinguished persons of whom it had been disgracefully ignorant, and is now thankful to be cognizant? We cannot say that we believe in either of these two suppositions. We will go further and say we think it very doubtful if the writers who drag such names into public believe it themselves? Why, then, it may be asked, do they write it, and why do newspaper editors and proprietors print it? In the first place we must remember that such intelligence fills up but a short space of those columns of miscellaneous news in which it usually appears. The compiler of such articles throws in a good deal which does interest the public, and slips in these scraps chiefly, we think, to gratify himself. For, secondly, it adds greatly to his own self-esteem, to be persuaded that the facts which he narrates are, whatever people may think, of real and permanent importance. If these men whose names he mentions are really great men, he too, may not, after all, be such a small one. If the most trifling features of literature are worthy of public record, there is hope for himself. As he cannot, for obvious reasons, enhance his own value by kicking down those beneath him, he has recourse to just the opposite system, namely, to shoving up those above him. If a man only five feet

high can be made to look six, a man only four feet high may perhaps be made to look five. Some such motives as these are what we think do unconsciously actuate many of those writers to whom we are indebted for that well-known species of article which we need not describe at greater length. It is just the old story in another shape of the man who played the "Cock" in *Hamlet*.

In assigning these motives for the production of a species of journalism which is now growing up like a rank weed in our literature, we are far from imputing any *special* weakness or folly to those who concoct it. Clergymen or barristers would like, just as well as literary men, to write about themselves and the doings of their own small circles. But literary men have the opportunity, and they have not. And we daresay, too, that many a literary "correspondent" merely writes about these matters because he is accustomed to talk about them; and for no worse motive than makes any other class of men in the world talk shop. But what we wish to impress upon the literary class is that such writing is shop, and just the same in principle as the parish talk of parsons, or the barrack talk of soldiers. All these relate equally to the mechanical routine—we had almost said drudgery—of the three professions; and contain nothing either to please or to improve persons who are not already familiar with them. Among a party of literary men seated round a club table, or enjoying a tavern dinner, such talk is natural, and perhaps profitable. But what reason there is why they should rush out, write it down, and print it, which would not equally justify curates, ensigns, or lawyers in rushing out and printing *theirs*, we defy any man to say. In a word, the outside public cares not for professional topics except when they rise above the lower level of the workshop into that broader region where they are to some extent common property. In the case of literature this region is wider, and extends lower than in the case of other professions. But literature, too, like them, has its mere mechanical sphere, its "shop," in fact; and this, we say, can be interesting only to the workmen.

We suppose it would be impossible to organize a Calcraft club. There are not, we fear, a sufficient number of gentlemen that way inclined in the whole kingdom, for Mr. Calcraft ever to find himself in a company where an allusion to the gallows would not savour of egotism. That great man accordingly has learned his lesson, and now, we are told, never broaches the theme, even in his cups. And yet there would be great excuse for him if he did. For the world is certainly more curious to know how great murderers die than how literary gentlemen live. And "our Newgate correspondent" would, we fancy, be read with an avidity which no one of the whole tribe of "Puffs" has ever yet succeeded in exciting. However, as this exalted kind of shop does not find its way into print, the question occurs if we could not dispense with what does. It cannot do much good; and it certainly does some harm. It either interests the public not at all, or interests them only by appealing to a silly curiosity. And it is unfair to men who, never having courted publicity, suddenly find it thrust upon them.

Julius Cæsar.

MODERN French literature is rich in works on Roman history. The passion of the French people for military glory, their worship of success, their inclination for rhetorical display, give them, perhaps, a special interest in tracing the career of the great conquering nation of antiquity, the founders of the mightiest of empires, most extensive in its sway, most enduring in its ultimate effects. Within the last twenty years there have appeared the monographs of Prosper Mérimée on the Social war and the Conspiracy of Catiline; clear, shrewd, and accurate, and disfigured by none of the straining for effect which is the bane of so much French writing:—the brief and rapid résumé of Roman history by Michelet, quite as spirited, and almost as whimsical as his later writings on many other subjects:—the Roman history of Duruy, which, with a few sentimentalisms and other sins against what we should call good taste, is really a consummate model of a compact and full epitome:—the very elaborate and deeply learned work of Champagny on the Cæsars, warped unfortunately to a theory, and resolutely presenting to us the dark side, and nothing but the dark side, of an age and a people which deserve to be regarded on every side and in every light that history and philosophy can shed upon them,—as a complement and counterpart to the Cæsars of Champagny, the “*Tacitus and his Age*” of Dubois-Guchan, whose theory is precisely the opposite of Champagny’s, and sheds, with equal learning and with eloquence only a little inferior, a gleam of rose-colour over every figure and every incident of the period:—again, the light and graceful sketches to which Ampère has given the title of a “*History of the Romans at Rome*,” in which the existing monuments of the ancient city are made to tell, as it were, their own story, not without many a touch of modern political innuendo:—the “*Roman Emperors*” of Zeller, an essay, if not so brilliant and fascinating as some, more sound, perhaps, and solid than any of these:—lastly, the valuable “*Picture of the Roman Empire*” with which Amédée Thierry has crowned the series of histories in which he has more particularly traced the connection of the Romans with Gaul. From this work, which is a short sketch of principles and results, the English reader will collect a clearer idea of the working of the Roman character than from many complete and regular narratives.

Such, at least, is the series of works upon this immortal theme which recur to our recollection when invited to consider a new account of the greatest epoch of Roman history, introduced by a rapid review of the earlier career of the Roman people. The Emperor of the French, whose long-announced and much-expected life of Julius Cæsar is now at last

before us, can hardly have discovered a blank to fill up in the long array of works above referred to, though such is commonly the excuse of a new author when he ventures into the field with his contribution to the stock of our knowledge. He is more generally impelled really by a special impulse, by a special attraction to his subject, by a personal conviction that he has something of his own to say, and a mission to go and say it. The Emperor does not pretend to tell us what we did not know before. The facts of his immediate subject lie in a comparatively narrow compass, and have been marshalled before us in their order by all his predecessors in succession; nor does he profess to combine these clearly, more graphically than others: but he tells us plainly that he has a theory to illustrate, and he suggests to us in almost every page that he has a purpose to advance.

The theory which the new life of Cæsar is intended to illustrate is indicated more or less distinctly in various passages in the body of the work; yet the preface is evidently put forward with a view of explaining it deliberately at the outset.

"Historic truth ought to be no less sacred than religion. If the precepts of faith raise our soul above the interests of this world, the lessons of history, in their turn, inspire us with the love of the beautiful and the just, and the hatred of whatever presents an obstacle to the progress of humanity. These lessons, to be profitable, require certain conditions. It is necessary that the facts be produced with vigorous exactness, that the changes, political or social, be analysed philosophically, that the exciting interest of the details of the lives of public men should not divert attention from the political part they played, or cause us to forget their *providential mission*. . . . Let us take it for granted that a great effect is always due to a great cause, and not to a small one; in other words, an accident insignificant in appearance never leads to important results without a pre-existing cause, which has permitted this slight accident to produce a great effect. . . . If, during nearly a thousand years, the Romans always came triumphant out of the severest trials and greatest perils, it is because there existed a general cause which made them always superior to their enemies, and which did not permit partial defeats and misfortunes to entail the fall of the empire. If the Romans, after giving an example to the world of a people constituting itself and growing great by liberty, seemed, after Cæsar, to throw themselves blindly into slavery, it is because there existed a general reason which, by *fatality*, prevented the Republic from returning to the purity of its ancient institutions."

We have marked in italics the two passages which seem here to contradict each other, and to vitiate the whole of this reasoning. It is nothing new to trace the revolutions of empires to the agency of a Providence which directs them for its own wise and beneficent ends; it is nothing new to disregard all the moral evidence of providential design in the conduct of human affairs, and refer their issues to a blind Destiny or Fortune; it is not altogether unheard of even among writers of repute and pretenders to

philosophy and logic, to jumble the two theories together, and so ring the changes alternately, from mere caprice or carelessness, or for the indulgence of a rhetorical fancy, upon both the one and the other, to confound providence with fate, God with fortune. This is precisely what the poet Lucan has done in introducing the same subject—the narrative of the fall of the Roman commonwealth. The poet was a disciple of the Stoic philosophy : he was nephew and pupil of a great master of that school of thought ; he was versed in the logic of the declaimers, and his mind was stored with all the abundance of their figures and illustrations. He was a man of genius, an enthusiast, a fanatic, a great rhetorician if not a great poet ; but he never bore the character of a great reasoner ; and of the causes he assigned for the terrible revolution which he undertakes to describe in immortal verse, the first is precisely the same confusion of fate and providence that is here repeated to us :—

*Invida fatorum series, sumnisque negatum
Stare diu, nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus,
Nec sc Roma ferens.*

It was the act of destiny, a hard and hapless law of which no account can be required, which suffers not anything to grow too great upon earth ; the same destiny which, by and by, will destroy the whole world, and reduce all things again to chaos. Then follows—

*In se magna ruunt : lætis hunc numina robus
Crescendi posuere modum.*

Destiny is here transformed into deity, fate has assumed the name of providence ; and this providence lapses again, in the next line, into a capricious fortune, which takes a spiteful pleasure in thwarting human power itself, and will not suffer so sweet an enjoyment to fall to the lot of mortals :—

*Nec gentibus ullis
Commodat in populum terræ pelagiique potentem
Invidiam fortuna suam.*

The poet has bestowed upon his thesis some rhetorical embellishment, which is lacking to the severe prose of our philosophical historian ; but the confusion between fate and providence is the same in both.

When the preface proceeds to illustrate this theory by particular examples, the purpose of the work that is to follow is immediately revealed. “ The preceding remarks sufficiently explain the aim I have in view in writing this history. This aim is to prove that when Providence raises up such men as Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, it is to trace out to peoples the path they ought to follow ; to stamp with the seal of their genius a new era ; and to accomplish in a few years the labour of centuries. Happy the peoples who comprehend and follow them ! woe to those who misunderstand and combat them ! They do as the Jews did who crucified their Messiah ; they are blind and culpable : blind, for they do not see the impotence of their efforts to suspend the definitive triumph of good ; culpable, for they only retard progress, by impeding its prompt and fruitful application.”

If we paused to criticize the reasoning of this passage in which the introduction of the sacred name seems wholly irrelevant, as well as offensive, at least to the taste of English readers, we might perhaps ask how, in any case, the blind can be culpable for their blindness. Of those who crucified the Messiah it was distinctly said, "Not seeing, they did not see." They shut their eyes wilfully to facts which were patent to them, and, therefore, their sin remained ; but if the providential mission of the great human triumvirate was so equally patent and palpable, the culpability of their opponents should be inferred, not from their being, as the writer here says, blind, but from their refusing to see what was so plainly obtruded upon them.

Nor does the confusion of thought end here. If Cæsar and Charlemagne and Napoleon were really raised up by a manifest Providence to effect certain ends which it was culpable in their contemporaries to ignore, at what period in their respective careers was this revelation actually made ? Were the Romans bound to recognize the mission of Cæsar from the moment that he defied the dictator, or restored the trophies of Marius ? Were the Saxons blind in disregarding the intimation conveyed by their blood-tainted fields and smoking villages of the mission of Charlemagne to establish the church universal ? Was the appointed overthrow of feudalism, and the new dispensation of the civil code, foreshadowed to every plain man's conviction by Napoleon's victory at Marengo, or his repulse before Acre ?

It may be now an accepted truth that the author of the coup d'état is the saviour of society ; but if he had suffered the common lot of unsuccessful rebels at Strasburg or Boulogne, would mankind stand convicted of culpable blindness in having acquiesced in his execution ?

The confusion of thought at which we here glance for a moment seems indeed to be characteristic of the work generally. But it serves a purpose, and may not be wholly unconscious. The purpose of this remarkable book—for such with many literary and moral defects it undoubtedly is—is to explain and defend the career of the two Napoleons, and more especially of the later one, by its suggested analogy with that of Julius Cæsar. From the moment that the present Emperor of the French preferred his claim to supreme power from his descent from his imperial uncle, the marked similarity of his position to that of Octavius, the nephew of the great Julius, and heir of his fortunes, arrested universal attention. That it was paramount in Louis Napoleon's own consideration we can have no doubt. The title of Saviour of Society with which his flatterers greeted him, and to which he so complacently listened, was the direct application to him of the tribute of grateful enthusiasm which the Romans lavished upon the protector of the Senate, the people, and the gods of Rome. A change, however, has come over the dream of the new Augustus. The obstinate refusal of the Virgils and the Livys, the Lamartines and the Thiers' of the restored empire, to embellish the court of their expectant sovereign, has persuaded him perhaps that it is idle to

anticipate a revival under his patronage of the characteristic glories of an Augustan age; while at the same time the military renown which he has legitimately acquired by the successes gained "under his auspices" in Mexico and the Crimea, and under his direct command in Italy, have taught him, as we imagine, to look with some disdain on the prototype whose genius was eminently peaceful, and whose personal courage was dubious. Accordingly, it is pretty clear from the book before us that the Emperor wishes us to regard him as the analogue in modern history not so much of Octavius as of Julius Cæsar himself. He intrudes himself into the place which was before supposed to be sacred to the first, and him whom we used to call the Great Napoleon. We have presented to us a sort of dissolving view, in which the person of the founder of the dynasty is insensibly displaced by that of his successor, like those ingenuous transformations of statuary which we witnessed the other day in the magic halls of the Polytechnic. Not, however, that the first Napoleon is to be altogether obliterated and extinguished by the substitution of his successor in his room. Roman history has fortunately provided us with another analogue for him. Julius Cæsar, too, had an uncle, and that uncle was no less than the great warrior, Caius Marius, the vanquisher of the faithless Jugurtha, the saviour of Rome from the Cimbri and the Teutons; the ruler of the republic through seven consulships, without the name, but with all the power of a king or a dictator; the assertor of great democratic principles, and oppugner of patrician privileges, the inaugurator of a new era of popular sovereignty; finally, we may add, as a parallel of our own, the refugee of a cruel fate and an ungrateful conspiracy, who sought a last asylum, "like Themistocles," on the shore of "Carthage." If then the Emperor feels it his destiny now to put off the robes of Octavius, and assume the sword and corselet of Julius, he has not left his illustrious uncle out in the cold, but he provided him too with a prototype of adequate merit and distinction. And in so doing, he leaves the niche of the more fortunate Augustus to be filled hereafter, under more auspicious circumstances, by a descendant, not, we sincerely hope, a collateral one, of his own.

Of the way in which this parallel between Cæsar and Napoleon, the elder or the younger, is suggested throughout this volume, many instances have been produced by the band of reviewers, under whose pen it has fallen during the last fortnight. There is none more prominent, or, so to say, audacious, than the exhibition of a pretended portrait of the Roman, idealized not from any one bust, or from any comparison of various busts of Cæsar, but from the artist's conception of the archetypal Napoleonic countenance. It is neither Cæsar nor the elder Napoleon, nor the younger, but something of all, not without a strong dash of Talma. Undoubtedly it is a very fine figure, and if ever it is actually realized in the flesh, we should perhaps be ready to admit that those who do not fall down and worship it are blind and culpable. At present, however, the aesthetic representation to us of the Napoleonic idea, so much divines

than any of its historical incarnations, serves only to remind us how far the heroes whom we are invited to admire, have fallen short of the celestial avatar which may yet be expected to "crown the edifice."

It is curious indeed to think that any man's vanity should so besot him as to make him think, as in this case is but too apparent, that his personal estimation is enhanced among his fellow-men by this coaxed or forced assimilation of himself to any great man whatever. Is human nature really so frivolous as to be thus deluded? Are the French people in particular, so shrewd in detecting absurdities and self-deceptions, the slaves of this trifling pretension? Did Julius Cæsar try to fancy himself, or to make others fancy him, like Marius, or even like Alexander? No. It is the fact, and it is to the point to mention it, that it was not an uncommon vanity among Roman conquerors to assimilate themselves to the Macedonian hero. Lucullus thought himself like Alexander, so did Pompey, so did Crassus. Even Augustus, it is said, was not indisposed to the flattery of those who likened him to the champion of Western civilization in the face of Oriental decrepitude. But Cæsar never. In the perfect simplicity and absence of self-consciousness, which seems more perhaps than any other quality, to raise him above other heroes of history, Cæsar thought very little of himself, and least of all in comparison with any one else. Once indeed, it is said, he *contrasted* himself with Alexander, when it was brought to his mind at how early an age the Macedonian had established his glory, and that he himself, then mature in years, had as yet done nothing—neither served a consulship, nor governed a province, nor commanded an army. He contrasted, he did not compare himself. Even Augustus, who had, no doubt, many vanities and weaknesses, never dreamed of comparing himself with Caesar. He, too, looked to himself and relied on his own resources; he looked forward to what he should do himself, not backward to what another had done before him; he drew his inspiration, and the word is hardly too strong for the impulse to administration and construction which animated him, from his personal examination of society around him, and accordingly he left a name, widely different in the ideas it raises in us from that of Cæsar, but not less suggestive than Cæsar's, of an era in human history.

When a book is put before us written by a personage so prominent in the drama of life, and about whose moral and intellectual characteristics we are naturally so curious, the first reflections which occur to us will, of course, refer to the author personally. But we will not suffer ourselves to be diverted any longer from glancing at least—which is all we propose at present—at the literary pretensions of a history which, notwithstanding the peculiar circumstances attending its publication, claims to be judged primarily on purely literary grounds. Let us put the emperor aside, and regard merely the author; let us sheathe the sword and veil the sceptre, and look simply at the book. We say at once that the work, as an indication of intellectual power, is a very remarkable one. We do not say that the History is a good one. The

greater part of the volume before us is devoted to a succinct history of Rome down to the era of Julius Caesar; the latter part commences the biography of the hero, but does not carry it beyond the period of Caesar's consulship, or the early years of his yet incomplete and undetermined career. We do not say that the history is a good one. In the first place, it is utterly, we had almost said ostentatiously, uncritical. Except on one or two points of very little importance, such as the settling of a date, there is no attempt to weigh conflicting evidence, to eliminate bad or dubious authority, to divine the truth of facts from the fragmentary hints which the wreck of time has left to us. There is no appearance of acquaintance even with the sources of doubt and suspicion about the whole of the earlier and much even of later Roman history which have been opened to us by the acuteness and criticism of modern inquirers. Niebuhr figures in these pages as a "learned German," along with Drumann, both learned, no doubt, but their respective learning bearing as much relation as that of Macaulay and Sir Cornwall Lewis. Of this last "learned Englishman," who thought as deeply as he read, and of the questions he has raised regarding the credibility of Roman history for the first three or four centuries it pretends to illustrate—questions which no historian of Rome has henceforth a right to pass over—the writer seems altogether unconscious. Mommsen, who also figures as a "learned German," should have taught a later writer on these subjects either to omit the early history, and especially that of the so-called "regal period," altogether, or to produce his reasons for venturing to treat it at all. Can it be, we are tempted to ask, that there was a parallel to be suggested, which the author could not prevail upon himself to discard; a parallel between the regal, the republican, and the imperial periods of Rome and those of France? Was it necessary for his theory to show from the presumed example of the ancient commonwealth, that the old French monarchy had its mission and its destiny; that in the fulness of time, progress and society demanded the substitution for it of a republic, and that the republic was "fated by Providence" to give way in due season to that which, in both cases, was to be the crown and flower of civilization, the empire? "Rebus humanis inest quidam orbis," said the fatalist Tacitus; and in this instance, as in so many others, the imperial author of this history embraces the same conclusion, and is at pains to show us the wheel in operation, whether it runs or slides or jumps in its progress.

Again, in the political remarks which are here and there interspersed with the narrative, the political moral with which a chapter is generally tagged, there is sometimes a want of logical consequence which is almost mortifying. In chapter iv. of the first book, under the title of "Mediterranean prosperity," we are presented with a survey of the material prosperity and resources of the countries around, and the islands within the basin of the great inland sea which was the centre of the Greek and Roman world. Such a survey deserved to hold a prominent place in any history of Rome; and Arnold, if we remember right, in his

biography of Augustus, had given a more general and a more graphical sketch of the same subject. Napoleon goes into it more particularly, enumerating the cities, specifying the products, estimating the military and naval resources, gauging the commercial advantages of every country in succession, without, we must add, any discrimination of the writers of various ages and various degrees of authority from whom he derives his information. Carthage and Egypt in the south, Spain in the west, Italy and Greece northward, Asia Minor and Syria eastward, pass in review before him, and in every quarter he notes undoubted signs of human energy and progress, whether indicated by Josephus or Strabo, by Pausanias or Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

The natural reflection, as it seems, from this survey, and the observation of the decline, more or less marked, in the prosperity of every one of these countries, compared with other outlying members of the human family, would be, that the great concerns and interests of the world are now carried on a vast and a distant theatre, not on an inland sea, however large, but on the ocean that surrounds the continents; that, as the world fills up with population, its business becomes, and will continue to become, more and more world-wide and universal. The globe is turned inside out; the activity of the world is exerted on its outer margins, not in its interior basins. It is not likely that the shores of Carthage and of Spain will ever again be the scene of such commercial intercourse as distinguished them in the early period of Greek and Roman history. But the eye of the Emperor glances from the southern, the western, the northern shores of the great French lake, and fastens upon the eastern; beholds there certain very patent signs of decay and decrepitude, and exclaims,—“The remembrance of such greatness inspires a very natural wish, namely, that henceforth the jealousy of the Great Powers may no longer prevent the East from shaking off the dust of twenty centuries, and from being born again to life and civilization!” The jealousy of the Great Powers! As if a decline which has dated from about fifteen hundred years ago was to be attributed to the modern theory of the balance of power two centuries old! Surely this is the vapid and aimless remark of a tired schoolmaster on shutting his class-book for the day! And yet, in the mouth of the master of thirty legions, it may indicate a policy and a purpose.

Nevertheless, the book is a remarkable one. It gives evidence of long and patient study, of comprehensive grasp of mind, persevering research, steadiness of aim. There is no trace, as far as we can judge, of any special cramming for the purpose. It bears, we think, unmistakable tokens of being the genuine work of the author whose name it bears—*bears*, at least, in the preface, for the majesty of empire, perhaps, does not allow it to appear on the title-page. It presents no appearance of being compiled from the hints of friendly professors, or the collections of hired secretaries. It betrays no imitation of, or competition with, any rival historiographer. It suggests the working of the severe scientific mind

of Italy, rather than of the brilliant theoretical genius of France. The author imposes a strict restraint upon himself, allows himself no pictorial effects, indulges in no general views and wide speculations, marshals his facts in close array, devotes page after page to statistical details, rejoices in tracing the development of the Roman power in the names and situation of the colonies, in the distribution of its forces, in the increasing numbers of its population returns. The history might have been modelled on the author's conception of the Rationarium Imperii, the Imperial calendar which Augustus elaborated with his own hand, and bequeathed as a heirloom to his successors. The style is grave, compact, transparent, not unlike the style of Cæsar himself in his *Commentaries*. It is the style of a man who feels himself superior to the petty vanity of the rhetorician, whose aim it is to instruct his reader, but who does not condescend to entertain him. It is the style of a monumental inscription, and seems to challenge the regard, not of contemporaries, but of a late posterity. If such ideas as these have been in the Emperor's mind, we think that he has not been unsuccessful in giving effect to his conception of the place in literature which is appropriate to his position in politics.

It is not till we have gone through two-thirds of the volume that we arrive at the hero himself. The history of Rome has been made to lead up to him. The constitution of the Commonwealth has been carried through centuries of conquests, shaded by occasional defeats, and the fruit of corruption and decay has been traced to seeds sown under the kings, and germinating, in their healthiest vigour, under the Republic. But Roman civilization has become over-ripe, the law of its development has been accomplished. The Republic has become impossible. It is time to inaugurate the Empire. In this conclusion we are fully disposed to agree. But the present volume carries the life of Cæsar no farther than to his consulship, through the first stages only of his attack on the ruling aristocracy. His views and plans are hardly yet patent to the general observer. It is easy to over-estimate the definiteness of his aims at this early period; and the author seems, perhaps, inclined to over-estimate it. But we cannot speak conclusively on this point till the later volumes of the work are before us; and it will be more interesting to the reader, and more respectful to its illustrious author, to defer our remarks on Cæsar's policy, and on the view he takes of it, together with the comparison he suggests between it and his own, till the whole is completed.

A Reminiscence of Cardinal Wiseman.

BY A PROTESTANT.

IN the winter of 1830-31, the British Catholics were represented at Rome by Cardinal Weld, of the Welds of Lulworth Castle. His Eminence was an English country gentleman, of the simplest manners, of no literary pretensions, of liberal politics, as were indeed all his Catholic countrymen in those days, and delighting to do the honours of the Eternal City to persons in any way connected with his family and home. It was to an intimacy of this kind that I was indebted for my introduction to the *Collegio Inglese*, at that time presided over by Dr. Wiseman. Among the students under his care was a young cousin of the name of Macarthy, with whom I soon formed a lasting friendship, and thus I was brought into frequent relations with the Rector of the College. These two men, Cardinal Wiseman, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, and Sir Charles Macarthy, Governor of Ceylon, have passed away within a few months of each other, the younger going first; each having done, in his separate walk of life, that which is a man's first duty—to use the talents given to his charge for what he believes to be a right purpose and honestly to win the respect and regard of mankind.

There was then in the English College the fresh recollection of the grateful jubilee that had been held to celebrate the political emancipation of the Catholics of Great Britain by the long efforts and frequent sacrifices of the Liberal party in Parliament; and Dr. Wiseman was looked upon with little good-will by those who were content to base the spiritual and temporal government of the world on a relation of absolute authority and obedience. He had withdrawn his pupils from their attendance on the lectures at the Jesuit College; and it was rumoured that Pope Gregory had by no means maintained the amicable feelings which had been manifested towards him by Pope Leo, his fast friend and patron. However that might be, Dr. Wiseman pursued an independent course of action, and impressed on all who came within the more intimate circle of his acquaintance, his sincere desire to reconcile the liberties of literature and science with a respectful recognition of his ecclesiastical position.

His life and education had been somewhat cosmopolitan. Some German translator of his *Herc Syriacæ* had described him in one many-syllabled word as the—"From-an-Irish-family-descended-in-Spain-born-

in-England-educated-in-Italy-consecrated Syrian scholar;" but he showed no inclination to merge his British nationality in his sacerdotal or scholastic character. His conversation ran mainly on subjects of English literature; and his greatest pleasure was to converse with his intellectual fellow-countrymen. He encouraged those tastes and habits among his pupils, as far as was consistent with the practices of a Catholic seminary. The books which were read aloud, according to conventional custom, during the noon-tide repast, were usually our British classics; and I remember, on more than one occasion of this kind, listening to a novel of Walter Scott's. Dr. Cullen was at that time the rector of the Irish College; but although I have met the future Catholic Primate of Ireland on high-days in the Hall of the *Collegio Inglese*, there was little intercourse between the two establishments, and apparently no close intimacy between the heads. The two bodies always walked separately in processions at great church ceremonies; and I am not aware that any of my English fellow-countrymen ever received such a tribute of fervid admiration as was paid to their Irish comrades, while, in their due turn, they were bearing aloft the Holy Father through the colonnades of St. Peter's at the festival of Corpus Christi, when a young English lady having exclaimed, "Oh, papa! do look at those handsome young priests; did you ever see such fine eyes?" was dreadfully shocked by the answer of one of them, in an unmistakable accent—"Thank you, Miss, for the compliment."

Another Irish ecclesiastic, however, Dr. McHale, Bishop of Killala— seemed more familiar with the inmates of the *Collegio Inglese*; perhaps from the very contrast of his character to that of the scholarly and courteous Dr. Wiseman, who used to watch the various demonstrations of his Hibernian zeal with considerable interest and amusement. That persistent nationality—which during his long career as Archbishop of Tuam has not only alienated Dr. McHale from all social intercourse with the representatives of British power in Ireland, but which has caused him to include in one sweeping denunciation the fiercest acts of old oppressors and the most benevolent efforts of modern legislators—the 'thorough' Strafford and the gentle Carlisle—had remained unaffected by the passive political attitude which was then the habit of the Roman Court—though not yet elevated into a doctrine—and refused to surrender an iota of his rights of resistance to civil authority. The example of Poland, just then succumbing after an heroic struggle to the colossus of the North, not only without the active sympathy of the Papal power, but with the distinct injunction to her ecclesiastics to submit humbly to the schismatic conqueror, was not calculated to assure the independent spirit of the Celtic prelate, who might anticipate a period when British diplomacy might turn against the Irish Catholic Church even her own spiritual arms, and coerce her to obedience by ultramontane aid. A result at that time by no means improbable: for who then dreamt of the political destiny

of Italy, which was quietly approaching to its dawn? Who then cared to trouble the pleasant somnolence of Art and Antiquity, in which the princes and peoples between the Alps and the sea reposed, with any more serious agitation than a commentary on Dante, the merits of Santa Filomèna, or the respective claims of the mature Pasta and the youthful Grisi? Happy days those for the tourist, whom no one troubled about his opinions or his religion—for the archæologist, who looked on Italy as an inexhaustible necropolis, and found it so—and for the collector, to whom every day noble poverty surrendered treasures of Art and curiosities of history at a moderate cost, with *giallo antico* not exhausted, and Constitutions undiscovered!

Yet, although the Protestant visitors of the English College were perfectly secure from any intrusive proselytism, and the only influences of the kind brought to bear were fair controversy when challenged and amiable inducements to see all that was best and most striking in the practice and symbolic action of the Roman Church, there was no concealment of the special interest attached to the circumstances and conduct of recent British converts. A Cornish baronet, far advanced in life, had not only lately professed himself a Roman Catholic, but, at his urgent desire, had been ordained a priest. The deepest anxiety was expressed as to his first performance of his mystical office; and it was hinted that a more than natural power of retentive memory was vouch-safed to him on the occasion. The son of Earl Spencer, who afterwards became notorious as Brother Ignatius, was at that time a resident in the college, and his first sermon in the church set apart for the services of the English Catholica, excited an intense interest among the students; and here, too, the success, though not very apparent to us curious Protestants, was a subject of much thankfulness. In all such matters Dr. Wiseman's interest was always affectionate and judicious, and never provoked any sense of extravagance in the outsiders.

Soon after the French Revolution of 1830 a remarkable company of Frenchmen arrived at Rome. The Abbé Lamennais, whose previous and future career I may assume to be generally known, came to demand justice of the chair of St. Peter against the throne of the *bourgeois* Gallican king. His enterprise of opening the public education of France to the free competition of the Church had been arrested by the law; and his young colleague, the Comte de Montalembert, had just commenced his strange and varied public life of distracted opinion and irreconcilable tendencies, by an eloquent and fruitless defence of the cause at the bar of the *Chambre des Pairs*. These two remarkable men were accompanied by the Abbé de Coux and M. Rio, now well-known throughout Europe as the graceful and pious historian of Christian Art. Lamennais, like Dr. Wiseman, had received Pope Leo the Twelfth's intellectual sympathy and honourable protection, and the author of the *Essai sur l'Indifférence* was known to have been designated at that time for the highest dignities

of the Church : but another spirit now predominated in the Roman Court, and he and his lieutenants were received with more than coldness and disregard. It did not, perhaps, become any non-Catholic to judge the causes of this policy. It certainly appeared to the casual observer that the dominant motives of the actors in these scenes were the disinclination to quarrel with the representatives of a successful revolution in France, and an indistinct dread of the large and popular basis on which the Abbé Lamennais was content to rest the authority and destiny of the Catholic Church. It is, however, no doubt open for any believer to discern in this repudiation of the future heretic and revolutionist a superior prescience of the danger of giving trust or favour to a lofty intelligence liable to serious aberration, and a mind too haughty to be steadfast in its service to any external rule. Be this as it may, the immediate impression was eminently disagreeable. You saw a man who had grown great in the defence of the Church, now that he had pushed forward some theories, which had the acceptance of the more earnest Catholics in France, with an inconvenient enthusiasm, not only left unsupported in his struggle but regarded with aversion. He had difficulty in even getting access to the Pope ; and one day, when he showed some little resentment on this score, a *Monsignore* superciliously observed that the Abbé surely did not come from a country in which his order were treated with especial respect. "You are mistaken, sir," said Lamennais ; "in France no one despises a priest—they reverence him, or they kill him."

To these missionaries of a wider and braver Catholicism Dr. Wiseman proffered a generous hospitality, which was thankfully received. The minute person and phthisical constitution of Lamennais did not permit him to take any important part in general society ; but the charm and earnestness of Montalembert—so French in his emotions and so English in his thoughts—competed with the simple, audacious spontaneity of his Breton colleague Rio—a Christian in politics and an artist in religion—to make the conversation of the decorous seminary as bright and coloured as that of the gayest Paris drawing-room. After the publication of the *Affaires de Rome*, the breach between the Abbé Lamennais and the Church probably precluded all future intercourse between the reformer and the prelate : the host of that table rose in honourable gradation to the loftiest functions of his profession ; and of the guest I will only record what a French artisan said to me in 1848, when I asked whether he knew by chance where M. Lamennais lodged ?—"Dans cette maison—là très-haut—tout près du ciel."

This is not the place to praise or criticize the lectures on the "Connection between Science and Revealed Religion," which I heard delivered by Dr. Wiseman in the apartments of Cardinal Weld during the Lent of 1835. But it is well to remember that at that time the subject was comparatively new, and the knowledge imparted in a great degree necessarily derived from original sources. The matter was not then contained in popular

works, but had to be sought at first-hand. As the teleological arguments which the Bridgwater Treatises and their successors had urged to weariness had not then familiarized the public mind with the connection between the truths of science and those of natural religion, so the abundant illustrations which Scripture may derive from ethnology, philology, and archæology were then confined to the learned, and had not been made the staple of endless Lectures, Essays, and Dictionaries. Thus these discourses were most interesting to all who heard them, and though, perhaps, the wide range they took created some distrust in the perfect accuracy of the author, yet his acknowledged eminence in one portion of Oriental philology fairly suggested the inference that he would not run the risk of careless assertions on inadequate knowledge in other portions of his work. He did not give these lectures to the public till after his settlement in England, and even then with some hesitation, as the preface avers. In announcing the publication to a friend, he wrote: "In a moment of great presumption, I resolved to premise to them a sonnet by way of dedication. I send it for your friendly inspection, requesting not merely that you will suggest any alteration, but that you will frankly say, if you think so, that it will not do. For I am far from believing myself anything so great as a poet." This was the sonnet:—

Some dive for pearls to crown a mortal brow,
Some fondly garlands weave to dress the shrine
Of fading beauty : so is my design,
Learning t' engrave that lay concealed till now,
And from known Science pluck each greenest bough ;
But not to deck the earthly, while Divine
Beauty and majesty, supreme as thine,
Religion ! shall my humble gift allow.
Thine was my childhood's path-lamp, and the oil
Of later watchings hath but fed the flame :
While I, embroid'ring here with pleasant toil
My imaged traceries around thy name,
This banner weave, in part from hostile spoil,
And pay my fealty to thy highest claim.

In a postscript he added, "Even if approved, I do not think that I shall have courage to publish it." The friend thus appealed to may probably have suggested that the lectures would be quite as well without the "verses dedicatory;" and I am not aware that they have ever appeared in print; but they are now not without a touching interest of their own, not only from the becoming diffidence shown by a man who even then lived among much to encourage vanity and self-confidence, but from the simple sentiment they express, and which his whole life illustrated. It has been stated that, shortly before his death, the Cardinal assembled the Chapter of his Church around his bed, and expressed to them his thankfulness that he had never been troubled by any difficulties or mental anxiety in matters of Faith. These lectures convey precisely

that impression. If Science can make itself useful and ancillary to Faith, so much the better for Science. As Lamennais himself once wrote, "Le monde matériel est Dieu mis en doute: gare à celui qui se laisse prendre!"

It was with no intention of leading a secluded or scholastic life that Dr. Wiseman came to England. He mixed freely in the interests and topics of the time, and I have just laid my hand on a letter in which he describes his attendance at a great meeting for the Irish Protestant clergy. "Heartily," he writes, "as I pity the individuals in distress, and wish that the triumph which is achieving could be bought without inflicting the slightest suffering on any human being, the tales which were unfolded could not but excite in my mind a feeling of self-congratulation and joy, in thinking that I was, perhaps, the only one in that assembled multitude who saw therein a stroke of retributive justice for injuries long inflicted under the pretence of religion. I have just come from Ireland, remember, from my first visit after twenty-five years, and I have warmed my patriotism at my domestic hearth, in the hall of my forefathers, who suffered and died for their religion. But I am getting into Mr. M——'s vein—*alias* King Cambyses'. Mr. M. was one of the speakers, and certainly very eloquent, but ranting and scenic."

Both at Oscott, where he superintended a college founded in a wholesome spirit of rivalry to the monopoly of Stonyhurst in the education of the Catholic gentry of England, and in his offices of Coadjutor and of Bishop of the London District, Dr. Wiseman extended his society beyond his co-religionists, and would in time have come to be regarded as any other distinguished man of letters. A decorous precedence was willingly given to him in Protestant houses, and he was becoming gradually esteemed as an author, although naturally his books were received with more favour and less criticism among those who sympathized with his opinions and objects than by the general reader. His style never became agreeable to ordinary English taste; the foreign education of his young manhood damaged the force and even the correctness of his diction, and a certain natural taste for richness of form and colour encumbered his writings with superfluous epithets and imagery. These defects would no doubt have been diminished by a longer and more frequent intercourse with the best-instructed of his countrymen; but in the year 1850 he returned to Rome, with the intention, it was reported, of taking up his abode there. I remember indeed his saying to his cousin Macarthy, who was then rising fast towards the highest grades of the Colonial service, "When you are tired of governing in all parts of the world, come and visit me in my *terzo piano* of——" some Roman palace which he particularly liked—I think it was the Colonna. But no such repose was in store for him. He returned to England, the first Roman Cardinal that had stood on British soil since Pole had died amid the fires of Smithfield, with the missive from the Flaminian gate in his hand, the agent of a bloodless but not innocuous revolution.

The story of the so-called Papal Aggression has yet to be written. The circumstances of the affair were crowded with misapprehension on all sides. There had been much to induce the belief, on the part of the Catholics, that a prince of the Roman Church and Court would be received without disfavour in England. The Government had only lately passed an Act of Parliament authorizing diplomatic relations with Rome ; and in the debate on Lord Eglintoun's clause, which limited the selection of the Papal envoys to this country to laymen, it has been distinctly stated in the House of Lords, on the Liberal side, that there would be no objection to the presence of a Cardinal in England. Again, the extent and power of the High-Church party that had lately developed itself at Oxford was extravagantly exaggerated by the Catholics, both at home and at Rome. The entirely intellectual character of the movement, and the certainty of its indignant repulse the moment it came into contact with the habits, instincts, and traditions of the English people, were not perceptible to Dr. Wiseman, whose recent few years of residence in his native land could not compensate for an early life of foreign impressions. How far he may have been encouraged in his notion of the improved feelings of this country towards Roman Catholicism by members of the Tractarian party, I have no means of knowing ; but with some of them he had friendly relations, and he had been one of the first of the authorities of his Church to approach them with a sympathetic interest, and to attract them to what he believed the only safe conclusion by a kindly appreciation of their doubts and difficulties.

He had also had an interview and conversation with Lord John Russell before he left England for Italy, of which he always spoke as affording a vindication of his future proceedings. Its confidential and private nature, he said, prevented him from appealing to it during his lifetime ; but he had written a record of it, which must, some day, be generally known, and would seriously affect the estimate of the imprudence of his conduct. If this is so, it is the more singular that the first overt act declaratory of opinion in high places, and premonitory of public indignation, should have proceeded from Lord John Russell. What was called "the Durham letter" was no doubt his personal production, and in no way sanctioned by his Cabinet ; but it had all the effect of a political Encyclical. Looking back on the affair, after the lapse of years, the chief mistake seems to have been the simultaneity of the new ecclesiastical arrangement and the advent of the Cardinal Archbishop. Either the one or the other by itself would have met with the usual amount of popular criticism as an unwelcome novelty, and here died away after a nine-days' bluster. When the vivacity of public feeling then aroused is remembered, it now seems fortunate for the religious liberties of our country that the issue was no worse than the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which in its result, and probably in the intent, exactly corresponded with the judgment of an *abus de pouvoir* delivered by the French High Court against the prelates who interfere too

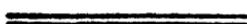
:prominently in political concerns. It was an official censure, *quantum valeat*, and nothing more.

But on the minds of individual Catholics, especially those prominently engaged in the matter, the Protestant demonstration produced a sense of indignant surprise. There was so much to be said in their favour on logical grounds, and the inferences from arguments of religious freedom were so patent, that the public condemnation struck them as something beyond the ordinary condition of public policy, and as tainted with personal ill-feeling and special injustice. Thus the Cardinal placed himself before his countrymen in the attitude of constant reproach for a grave wrong committed not only against his person and his community, but against the liberal principles of the men and the party with whom the Catholics of England had been for so long connected. His position among us must, in any case, have been somewhat anomalous and uncomfortable. The social rank of the Cardinalate had formed the subject of dispute with half the Courts of Christendom. It had been asserted to be higher than that of the members of the Royal Family itself in any foreign country, inasmuch as every Cardinal was not only a prince of the Roman State, but *particeps regni Romani*, and as such notified his accession to all Catholic sovereigns. And though this assumption has been rarely, if ever, admitted, yet it is difficult to imagine where that awful tribunal—the Board of Green Cloth—could have decided to range the Cardinal, so as to be agreeable to the feelings of the Papal Court, and even to the custom of Catholic countries, and not to shock the precise and historical gradations of rank assigned to the subjects of the British Crown. But even in the various circles of private life the Cardinal was much restricted by the dignity of his position. He had to be treated as a Prince in a society which dislikes ostentation and restraint, and which becomes exclusive from its inclination to ease and equality. He did not fare better with his individual relations with the Protestant world; they gradually became weaker even where they had been the closest; and except on such occasions as his appearance as a lecturer at the Royal Institution, his last years were passed in the diligent discharge of his episcopal duties, and in company where his intellectual as well as his social superiority remained unchallenged.

Apart from the advantages which the internal administration of the Roman Catholic Church in this country may have derived from the change, it now appears very questionable whether the coming of Cardinal Wiseman is not rather a subject of regret than of happy retrospect to the Catholics themselves. It began by driving out of public life some most estimable men, such as the late Duke of Norfolk and Mr. Torrens M'Cullagh, who led the hopeless opposition to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; it has made it next to impossible, for many years to come, for any Catholic to represent an English constituency; it has embittered the fair discussion of questions in which the discipline and the customs of the Roman Catholic Church come into contact either with the moral prejudices or the intellectual pretensions of

their Protestant fellow-countrymen ; it has reopened the ancient wounds of Irish party-animosity which the great common calamity of the Famine had gone far to cauterize ; and it has dissociated the leading Catholics in England from those liberal traditions which, if unbroken, might now enable them to do a signal service to their age and their religion, by making them the mediators between the providential necessities of the fruitful present and the deep-rooted associations of decaying systems.

Such might have been the function of Nicholas Wiseman, had not circumstances, rather than conduct, placed him in a groove in which he was compelled to continue to the end. The supposition which I have heard expressed, even by the Roman Catholic clergy, that he might have ascended the chair of St. Peter, after the demise of its present occupant, is extravagant. The Italian portion of the Conclave, as long at least as the temporal power is throned in the Vatican, will not relax the rule, established centuries ago, to limit the selection of the Pope to the *prelatura* of Italy ; nor is it probable that there would be ever such a concordance of opinion in the representatives of other nations as to afford any chance of breaking down this monopoly. But even though he had never attained any of the highest clerical dignities, Dr. Wiseman, in the ordinary course of his profession, would have exercised a very wide moral influence by the general justice of his mind and the sweetness of his disposition. If he had to be intolerant, it was against the grain ; and perhaps he gladly took refuge in a somewhat pompous rhetoric from the necessity of plainly expressing unpalatable truths and harsh conclusions. Such at least is the estimate of one who knew him intimately for many years, and who will ever retain a pleasant and affectionate memory of his talents and his virtues.





T H E
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1865.

Armadale.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER OLDERSHAW ON HER GUARD

1.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw (Diana Street, Pimlico) to Miss Gwilt (West Place, Old Brompton).*

“Ladies’ Toilette Repository,

“June 20th, Eight in the Evening.



Y DEAR LYDIA,—About three hours have passed, as well as I can remember, since I pushed you unceremonioualy inside my house in West Place; and, merely telling you to wait till you saw me again, banged the door to between us, and left you alone in the hall. I know your sensitive nature, my dear, and I am afraid you have made up your mind by this time that never yet was a guest treated so abominably by her hostess as I have treated you.

“The delay that has prevented me from explaining my strange conduct is, believe me, a delay for which I am not to blame. One of the many delicate little

difficulties which beset so essentially confidential a business as ours, occurred here (as I have since discovered) while we were taking the air

this afternoon in Kensington Gardens. I see no chance of being able to get back to you for some hours to come, and I have a word of very urgent caution for your private ear, which has been too long delayed already. So I must use the spare minutes as they come, and write.

"Here is caution' the first. On no account venture outside the door again this evening; and be very careful, while the daylight lasts, not to show yourself at any of the front windows. I have reason to fear that a certain charming person now staying with me may possibly be watched. Don't be alarmed, and don't be impatient; you shall know why.

"I can only explain myself by going back to our unlucky meeting in the gardens with that reverend gentleman who was so obliging as to follow us both back to my house.

"It crossed my mind, just as we were close to the door, that there might be a motive for the parson's anxiety to trace us home, far less creditable to his taste, and far more dangerous to both of us than the motive you supposed him to have. In plainer words, Lydia, I rather doubted whether you had met with another admirer; and I strongly suspected that you had encountered another enemy instead. There was no time to tell you this. There was only time to see you safe into the house, and to make sure of the parson (in case my suspicions were right) by treating him as he had treated us—I mean, by following him in his turn.

"I kept some little distance behind him at first, to turn the thing over in my mind, and to be satisfied that my doubts were not misleading me. We have no concealments from each other; and you shall know what my doubts were. I was not surprised at *your* recognizing *him*; he is not at all a common-looking old man; and you had seen him twice in Somersetshire—once when you asked *your* way of him to Mrs. Armadale's house; and once when you saw him again on *your* way back to the railroad. But I was a little puzzled (considering that you had *your* veil down on both those occasions, and *your* veil down also when we were in the Gardens,) at *his* recognizing *you*. I doubted his remembering *your* figure, in a summer dress, after he had only seen it in a winter dress; and though we were talking when he met us, and *your* voice is one among your many charms, I doubted his remembering *your* voice either. And yet I felt persuaded that he knew *you*. 'How?' you will ask. My dear, as ill-back would have it, we were speaking at the time of young Armadale. I firmly believe that the name was the first thing that struck him; and when he heard that, *you* spoke certainly, and *your* figure perhaps, came back to his memory. 'And what if it did?' you may say. Think again, Lydia, and tell me whether the person of the place where Mrs. Armadale lived, was not likely to be Mrs. Armadale's friend? If he was her friend, the very first person to whom she would apply for advice after the manner in which you frightened her, and after what you most injudiciously said on the subject of appealing to her son, would be the clergyman of the parish—and the magistrate too, as the landlord at the inn himself told you.

. "You will now understand why I left you in that extremely uncivil manner, and I may go on to what happened next.

"I followed the old gentleman till he turned into a quiet street, and then accosted him with respect for the Church written (I flatter myself) in every line of my face.

"'Will you excuse me,' I said, 'if I venture to inquire, sir, whether you recognized the lady who was walking with me when you happened to pass us in the Gardens?'

"'Will you excuse my asking, ma'am, why you put that question?' was all the answer I got.

"'I will endeavour to tell you, sir,' I said. 'If my friend is not an absolute stranger to you, I should wish to request your attention to a very delicate subject, connected with a lady deceased, and with her son who survives her.'

"He was staggered; I could see that. But he was sly enough at the same time to hold his tongue and wait till I said something more.

"'If I am wrong, sir, in thinking that you recognized my friend,' I went on, 'I beg to apologize. But I could hardly suppose it possible that a gentleman in your profession would follow a lady home who was a total stranger to him.'

"There I had him. He coloured up (fancy that, at his age!), and owned the truth, in defence of his own precious character.

"'I have met with the lady once before, and I acknowledge that I recognized her in the Gardens,' he said. 'You will excuse me if I decline entering into the question of whether I did, or did not, purposely follow her home. If you wish to be assured that your friend is not an absolute stranger to me, you now have that assurance; and if you have anything particular to say to me, I leave you to decide whether the time has come to say it.'

"He waited, and looked about. I waited, and looked about. He said the street was hardly a fit place to speak of a delicate subject in. I said the street was hardly a fit place to speak of a delicate subject in. He didn't offer to take me to where he lived. I didn't offer to take him to where I lived. Have you ever seen two strange cats, my dear, nose to nose on the tiles? If you have, you have seen the person and me done to the life.

"'Well, ma'am,' he said, at last, 'shall we go on with our conversation in spite of circumstances?'

"'Yes, sir,' I said; 'we are both of us, fortunately, of an age to set circumstances at defiance' (I had seen the old wretch looking at my grey hair, and satisfying himself that his character was safe if he was seen with me).

"After all this snapping and snarling, we came to the point at last. I began by telling him that I feared his interest in you was not of the friendly sort. He admitted that much—of course, in defence of his own character once more. I next repeated to him everything you had told

me about your proceedings in Somersetshire, when we first found that he was following us home. Don't be alarmed, my dear—I was acting on principle. If you want to make a dish of lies digestible, always give it a garnish of truth. Well, having appealed to the reverend gentleman's confidence in this manner, I next declared that you had become an altered woman since he had seen you last. I revived that dead wretch, your husband (without mentioning names, of course), established him (the first place I thought of) in business at the Brazils, and described a letter which he had written, offering to forgive his erring wife, if she would repent and go back to him. I assured the parson that your husband's noble conduct had softened your obdurate nature ; and then, thinking I had produced the right impression, I came boldly to close quarters with him. I said, 'At the very time when you met us, sir, my unhappy friend was speaking in terms of touching self-reproach of her conduct to the late Mrs. Armadale. She confided to me her anxiety to make some atonement, if possible, to Mrs. Armadale's son ; and it is at her entreaty (for she cannot prevail on herself to face you) that I now beg to inquire whether Mr. Armadale is still in Somersetshire, and whether he would consent to take back in small instalments the sum of money which my friend acknowledges that she received by practising on Mrs. Armadale's fears.' Those were my very words. A neater story (accounting so nicely for everything) was never told ; it was a story to melt a stone. But this Somersetshire parson is harder than stone itself. I blush for him, my dear, when I assure you that he was evidently insensible enough to disbelieve every word I said about your reformed character, your husband in the Brazils, and your penitent anxiety to pay the money back. It is really a disgrace that such a man should be in the Church ; such cunning as his is in the last degree unbecoming in a member of a sacred profession.

"Does your friend propose to join her husband by the next steamer ?' was all he condescended to say, when I had done.

"I acknowledge I was angry. I snapped at him. I said—'Yes, she does.'

"How am I to communicate with her ?' he asked.

"I snapped at him again. 'By letter—through me.'

"At what address, ma'am ?'

"There I had him once more. 'You have found my address out for yourself, sir,' I said. 'The directory will tell you my name, if you wish to find that out for yourself also ; otherwise, you are welcome to my card.'

"Many thanks, ma'am. If your friend wishes to communicate with Mr. Armadale, I will give you my card in return.'

"Thank you, sir.'

"Thank you, ma'am.'

"Good afternoon, sir.'

"Good afternoon, ma'am.'

"So we parted. I went my way to an appointment at my place of

business, and he went his in a hurry ; which is of itself suspicious. What I can't get over, is his heartlessness. Heaven help the people who send for him to comfort them on their death-beds !

" The next consideration is, What are we to do ? If we don't find out the right way to keep this old wretch in the dark, he may be the ruin of us at Thorpe-Ambrose just as we are within easy reach of our end in view. Wait up till I come to you, with my mind free, I hope, from the other difficulty which is worrying me here. Was there ever such ill-luck as ours ? Only think of that man deserting his congregation, and coming to London just at the very time when we have answered the advertisement, and may expect the inquiries to be made next week ! I have no patience with him—his bishop ought to interfere.

" Affectionately yours,

" MARIA OLDERSHAW."

2.—From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.

" West Place, June 20th.

" MY POOR OLD DEAR,—How very little you know of my sensitive nature, as you call it ! Instead of feeling offended when you left me, I went to your piano, and forgot all about you till your messenger came. Your letter is irresistible ; I have been laughing over it till I am quite out of breath. Of all the absurd stories I ever read, the story you addressed to the Somersetshire clergyman is the most ridiculous. And as for your interview with him in the street, it is a perfect sin to keep it to ourselves. The public ought really to enjoy it in the form of a farce at one of the theatres.

" Luckily for both of us (to come to serious matters), your messenger is a prudent person. He sent upstairs to know if there was an answer. In the midst of my merriment I had presence of mind enough to send downstairs and say, ' Yes.'

" Some brute of a man says in some book which I once read, that no woman can keep two separate trains of ideas in her mind at the same time. I declare you have almost satisfied me that the man is right. What ! when you have escaped unnoticed to your place of business, and when you suspect this house to be watched, you propose to come back here, and to put it in the parson's power to recover the lost trace of you ! What madness ! Stop where you are ; and when you have got over your difficulty at Pimlico (it is some woman's business of course ; what worries women are !), be so good as to read what I have got to say about our difficulty at Brompton.

" In the first place, the house (as you supposed) is watched. Half-an-hour after you left me, loud voices in the street interrupted me at the piano, and I went to the window. There was a cab at the house opposite, where they let lodgings ; and an old man, who looked like a respectable servant, was wrangling with the driver about his fare. An elderly

gentleman came out of the house, and stopped them. An elderly gentleman returned into the house, and appeared cautiously at the front drawing-room window. You know him, you worthy creature—he had the bad taste, some few hours since, to doubt whether you were telling him the truth. Don't be afraid, he didn't see me. When he looked up, after settling with the cab-driver, I was behind the curtain. I have been behind the curtain once or twice since; and I have seen enough to satisfy me that he and his servant will relieve each other at the window, so as never to lose sight of your house here, night or day. That the parson suspects the real truth is of course impossible. But that he firmly believes I mean some mischief to young Armadale, and that you have entirely confirmed him in that conviction, is as plain as that two and two make four. And this has happened (as you helplessly remind me) just when we have answered the advertisement, and when we may expect the major's inquiries to be made in a few days' time.

"Surely, here is a terrible situation for two women to find themselves in? A fiddlestick's end for the situation! We have got an easy way out of it—thanks, Mother Oldershaw, to what I myself forced you to do, not three hours before the Somersetshire clergyman met with us.

"Has that venomous little quarrel of ours this morning—after we had pounced on the major's advertisement in the newspaper—quite slipped out of your memory? Have you forgotten how I persisted in my opinion that you were a great deal too well known in London to appear safely as my reference in your own name, or to receive an inquiring lady or gentleman (as you were rash enough to propose) in your own house? Don't you remember what a passion you were in when I brought our dispute to an end by declining to stir a step in the matter, unless I could conclude my application to Major Milroy by referring him to an address at which you were totally unknown, and to a name which might be anything you pleased, as long as it was not yours? What a look you gave me when you found there was nothing for it but to drop the whole speculation, or to let me have my own way! How you fumed over the lodging-hunting on the other side of the Park! and how you groaned when you came back, possessed of Furnished Apartments in respectable Bayswater, over the useless expense I had put you to! What do you think of those Furnished Apartments now, you obstinate old woman? Here we are, with discovery threatening us at our very door, and with no hope of escape unless we can contrive to disappear from the parson in the dark. And there are the lodgings in Bayswater, to which no inquisitive strangers have traced either you or me, ready and waiting to swallow us up—the lodgings in which we can escape all further molestation, and answer the major's inquiries at our ease. Can you see, at last, a little farther than your poor old nose? Is there anything in the world to prevent your safe disappearance from Pimlico to-night, and your safe establishment at the new lodgings, in the character of my respectable reference, half-an-hour afterwards? Oh, fie, fie, Mother

Oldershaw ! Go down on your wicked old knees, and thank your stars that you had a she-devil like me to deal with this morning !

" Suppose we come now to the only difficulty worth mentioning—my difficulty. Watched as I am in this house, how am I to join you without bringing the parson or the parson's servant with me at my heels ?

" Being to all intents and purposes a prisoner here, it seems to me that I have no choice but to try the old prison plan of escape—a change of clothes. I have been looking at your housemaid. Except that we are both light, her face and hair and my face and hair are as unlike each other as possible. But she is as nearly as can be my height and size ; and (if she only knew how to dress herself, and had smaller feet) her figure is a very much better one than it ought to be for a person in her station in life. My idea is, to dress her in the clothes I wore in the Gardens to-day—to send her out, with our reverend enemy in full pursuit of her—and, as soon the coast is clear, to slip away myself and join you. The thing would be quite impossible, of course, if I had been seen with my veil tip ; but, as events have turned out, it is one advantage of the horrible exposure which followed my marriage, that I seldom show myself in public, and never of course in such a populous place as London, without wearing a thick veil and keeping that veil down. If the house-maid wears my dress, I don't really see why the housemaid may not be counted on to represent me to the life.

" The one question is, can the woman be trusted ? If she can, send me a line, telling her, on your authority, that she is to place herself at my disposal. I won't say a word till I have heard from you first.

" Let me have my answer to-night. As long as we were only talking about my getting the governess's place, I was careless enough how it ended. But now that we have actually answered Major Milroy's advertisement, I am in earnest at last. I mean to be Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose ; and woe to the man or woman who tries to stop me !

" Yours,

" LYDIA GWILT.

" P.S.—I open my letter again to say that you need have no fear of your messenger being followed on his return to Pimlico. He will drive to a public-house where he is known, will dismiss the cab at the door, and will go out again by a back way which is only used by the landlord and his friends.—L. G."

8.—From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.

" Diana Street, 10 o'clock.

" MY DEAR LYDIA,—You have written me a heartless letter. If you had been in my trying position, harassed as I was when I wrote to you, I should have made allowances for my friend when I found my friend not so sharp as usual. But the vice of the present age is a want of consideration for persons in the decline of life. Your mind is in a sad state, my

dear ; and you stand much in need of a good example. You shall have a good example—I forgive you.

" Having now relieved my mind by the performance of a good action, suppose I show you next (though I protest against the vulgarity of the expression) that I *can* see a little farther than my poor old nose ?

" I will answer your question about the housemaid first. You may trust her implicitly. She has had her troubles, and has learnt discretion. She also looks your age ; though it is only her due to say that, in this particular, she has some years the advantage of you. I enclose the necessary directions which will place her entirely at your disposal.

" And what comes next ? Your plan for joining me at Bayswater comes next. It is very well, as far as it goes ; but it stands sadly in need of a little judicious improvement. There is a serious necessity (you shall know why presently) for deceiving the parson far more completely than you propose to deceive him. I want him to see the housemaid's face under circumstances which will persuade him that it is *your* face. And then, going a step farther, I want him to see the housemaid leave London, under the impression that he has seen *you* start on the first stage of your journey to the Brazils. He didn't believe in that journey when I announced it to him this afternoon in the street. He may believe in it yet, if you follow the directions I am now going to give you.

" To-morrow is Saturday. Send the housemaid out in your walking dress of to-day, just as you propose—but don't stir out yourself, and don't go near the window. Desire the woman to keep her veil down ; to take half-an-hour's walk (quite unconscious, of course, of the parson or his servant at her heels) ; and then to come back to you. As soon as she appears, send her instantly to the open window, instructing her to lift her veil carelessly, and look out. Let her go away again after a minute or two, take off her bonnet and shawl, and then appear once more at the window, or, better still, in the balcony outside. She may show herself again occasionally (not too often) later in the day. And to-morrow—as we have a professional gentleman to deal with—by all means send her to church. If these proceedings don't persuade the parson that the housemaid's face is your face, and if they don't make him readier to believe in your reformed character than he was when I spoke to him, I have lived sixty years, my love, in this vale of tears to mighty little purpose.

" The next day is Monday. I have looked at the shipping advertisements, and I find that a steamer leaves Liverpool for the Brazils on Tuesday. Nothing could be more convenient ; we will start you on your voyage under the parson's own eyes. You may manage it in this way :—

" At one o'clock send out the man who cleans the knives and forks to get a cab ; and when he has brought it up to the door, let him go back and get a second cab, which he is to wait in himself, round the corner, in the square. Let the housemaid (still in your dress) drive off, with the necessary boxes, in the first cab to the North-Western Railway. When she is gone, slip out yourself to the cab waiting round the corner, and

come to me at Bayswater. They may be prepared to follow the housemaid's cab, because they have seen it at the door; but they won't be prepared to follow your cab, which has been hidden round the corner. When the housemaid has got to the station, and has done her best to disappear in the crowd (I have chosen the mixed train at 2.10, so as to give her every chance), you will be safe with me; and whether they do or do not find out that she does not really start for Liverpool won't matter by that time. They will have lost all trace of *you*; and they may follow the housemaid half over London, if they like. She has my instructions (enclosed) to leave the empty boxes to find their way to the lost luggage office, and to go to her friends in the City, and stay there till I write word that I want her again.

"And what is the object of all this? My dear Lydia, the object is your future security (and mine). We may succeed, or we may fail in persuading the parson that you have actually gone to the Brazils. If we succeed, we are relieved of all fear of him. If we fail, he will warn young Armadale to be careful of *a woman like my housemaid, and not of a woman like you*. This last gain is a very important one; for we don't know that Mrs. Armadale may not have told him your maiden name. In that event, the 'Miss Gwilt' whom he will describe as having slipped through his fingers here, will be so entirely unlike the 'Miss Gwilt' established at Thorpe-Ambrose, as to satisfy everybody that it is not a case of similarity of persons, but only a case of similarity of names.

"What do you say now to my improvement on your idea? Are my brains not quite so addled as you thought them when you wrote? Don't suppose I'm at all over-boastful about my own ingenuity. Cleverer tricks than this trick of mine are played off on the public by swindlers, and are recorded in the newspapers every week. I only want to show you that my assistance is not less necessary to the success of the Armadale speculation now, than it was when I made our first important discoveries, by means of the harmless-looking young man and the private inquiry-office in Shadyside Place.

"There is nothing more to say that I know of, except that I am just going to start for the new lodging, with a box directed in my new name. The last expiring moments of Mother Oldershaw, of the Toilette Repository, are close at hand; and the birth of Miss Gwilt's respectable reference, Mrs. Mandeville, will take place in a cab in five minutes' time. I fancy I must be still young at heart, for I am quite in love already with my romantic name; it sounds almost as pretty as Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose, doesn't it? Good-night, my dear, and pleasant dreams. If any accident happens between this and Monday, write to me instantly by post. If no accident happens, you will be with me in excellent time for the earliest inquiries that the major can possibly make. My last words are, don't go out, and don't venture near the front windows till Monday comes.

"Affectionately yours,

"M. O."

CHAPTER VI.

MIDWINTER IN DISGUISE.

TOWARDS noon, on the day of the twenty-first, Miss Milroy was loitering in the cottage garden—released from duty in the sick-room by an improvement in her mother's health—when her attention was attracted by the sound of voices in the park. One of the voices she instantly recognized as Allan's : the other was strange to her. She put aside the branches of a shrub near the garden palings; and peeping through, saw Allan approaching the cottage gate, in company with a slim, dark, titidorsized man, who was talking and laughing excitably at the top of his voice. Miss Milroy ran indoors, to warn her father of Mr. Armadale's arrival, and to add that he was bringing with him a noisy stranger, who was, in all probability, the friend generally reported to be staying with the squire at the great house.

Had the major's daughter guessed right? Was the squire's loud-talking, loud-laughing companion the shy, sensitive Midwinter of other times? It was even so. In Allan's presence, that morning, an extraordinary change had passed over the ordinarily quiet demeanour of Allan's friend.

When Midwinter had first appeared in the breakfast-room, after putting aside Mr. Brock's startling letter, Allan had been too much occupied to pay any special attention to him. The undecided difficulty of choosing the day for the audit-dinner had pressed for a settlement once more, and had been fixed at last (under the butler's advice) for Saturday, the twenty-eighth of the month. It was only on turning round to remind Midwinter of the ample space of time which the new arrangement allowed for mastering the steward's books, that even Allan's flighty attention had been arrested by a marked change in the face that confronted him. He had openly noticed the change in his usual blunt manner, and had been instantly silenced by a fretful, almost an angry, reply. The two had sat down together to breakfast without the usual cordiality; and the meal had proceeded gloomily, till Midwinter himself broke the silence by bursting into the strange outbreak of gaiety which had revealed in Allan's eyes a new side to the character of his friend.

As usual with most of Allan's judgments, here again the conclusion was wrong. It was no new side to Midwinter's character that now presented itself—it was only a new aspect of the one ever-recurring struggle of Midwinter's life.

Irritated by Allan's discovery of the change in him, which he had failed to see reflected in his looking-glass, when he had consulted it on leaving his room; feeling Allan's eyes still fixed inquiringly on his face, and dreading the next questions that Allan's curiosity might put, Midwinter had roused himself to efface, by main force, the impression which his own altered appearance had produced. It was one of those efforts

which no man compass so resolutely as the men of his quick temper, and his sensitive feminine organization. With his whole mind still possessed by the firm belief that the Fatality had taken one great step nearer to Allan and himself since the rector's discovery in Kensington Gardens—with his face still betraying what he had suffered, under the renewed conviction that his father's deathbed warning was now, in event after event, asserting its terrible claim to part him, at any sacrifice, from the one human creature whom he loved—with the fear still busy at his heart that the first mysterious Vision of Allan's Dream might be a Vision realized, before the new day that now saw the two Armadales together was a day that had passed over their heads—with these triple bonds, wrought by his own superstition, fettering him at that moment as they had never fettered him yet, he mercilessly spurred his resolution to the desperate effort of rivalling, in Allan's presence, the gaiety and good spirits of Allan himself. He talked, and laughed, and heaped his plate indiscriminately from every dish on the breakfast-table. He made noisily merry with jests that had no humour, and stories that had no point. He first astonished Allan, then amused him, then won his easily-encouraged confidence on the subject of Miss Milroy. He shouted with laughter over the sudden development of Allan's views on marriage, until the servants downstairs began to think that their master's strange friend had gone mad. Lastly, he had accepted Allan's proposal that he should be presented to the major's daughter, and judge of her for himself, as readily—nay, more readily than it would have been accepted by the least diffident man living. There the two now stood at the cottage gate—Midwinter's voice rising louder and louder over Allan's—Midwinter's natural manner disguised (how madly and miserably none but he knew!) in a coarse masquerade of boldness—the outrageous, the unendurable boldness of a shy man.

They were received in the parlour by the major's daughter, pending the arrival of the major himself.

Allan attempted to present his friend in the usual form. To his astonishment, Midwinter took the words flippantly out of his lips, and introduced himself to Miss Milroy with a confident look, a hard laugh, and a clumsy assumption of ease which presented him at his worst. His artificial spirits, lashed continuously into higher and higher effervescence since the morning, were now mounting hysterically beyond his own control. He looked and spoke with that terrible freedom of licence which is the necessary consequence, when a diffident man has thrown off his reserve, of the very effort by which he has broken loose from his own restraints. He involved himself in a confused medley of apologies that were not wanted, and of compliments that might have over-flattered the vanity of a savage. He looked backwards and forwards from Miss Milroy to Allan, and declared jocosely that he understood now why his friend's morning walks were always taken in the same direction. He asked her questions about her mother, and cut short the answers she gave him by

remarks on the weather. In one breath, he said she must feel the day insufferably hot; and, in another, he protested that he quite envied her in her cool muslin dress.

The major came in. Before he could say two words, Midwinter overwhelmed him with the same frenzy of familiarity, and the same feverish fluency of speech. He expressed his interest in Mrs. Milroy's health in terms which would have been exaggerated on the lips of a friend of the family. He overflowed into a perfect flood of apologies for disturbing the major at his mechanical pursuits. He quoted Allan's extravagant account of the clock, and expressed his own anxiety to see it in terms more extravagant still. He paraded his superficial book-knowledge of the great clock at Strasbourg, with far-fetched jests on the extraordinary automaton figures which that clock puts in motion—on the procession of the twelve apostles, which walks out under the dial at noon, and on the toy-cock, which crows at St. Peter's appearance—and this before a man who had studied every wheel in that complex machinery, and who had passed whole years of his life in trying to imitate it. "I hear you have outnumbered the Strasbourg apostles, and outcrowed the Strasbourg cock," he exclaimed, with the tone and manner of a friend habitually privileged to waive all ceremony; "and I am dying, absolutely dying, major, to see your wonderful clock!"

Major Milroy had entered the room with his mind absorbed in his own mechanical contrivances as usual. But the sudden shock of Midwinter's familiarity was violent enough to recall him instantly to himself, and to make him master again, for the time, of his social resources as a man of the world.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," he said, stopping Midwinter for the moment, by a look of steady surprise. "I happen to have seen the clock at Strasbourg; and it sounds almost absurd in my ears (if you will pardon me for saying so) to put my little experiment in any light of comparison with that wonderful achievement. There is nothing else of the kind like it in the world!" He paused, to control his own mounting enthusiasm; the clock at Strasbourg was to Major Milroy what the name of Michael Angelo was to Sir Joshua Reynolds. "Mr. Armadale's kindness has led him to exaggerate a little," pursued the major, smiling at Allan, and passing over another attempt of Midwinter's to seize on the talk, as if no such attempt had been made. "But as there does happen to be this one point of resemblance between the great clock abroad and the little clock at home, that they both show what they can do on the stroke of noon, and as it is close on twelve now, if you still wish to visit my workshop, Mr. Midwinter, the sooner I show you the way to it the better." He opened the door, and apologized to Midwinter, with marked ceremony, for preceding him out of the room.

"What do you think of my friend?" whispered Allan, as he and Miss Milroy followed.

"Must I tell you the truth, Mr. Armadale?" she whispered back.

"Of course!"

"Then I don't like him at all!"

"He's the best and dearest fellow in the world," rejoined the outspoken Allan. "You'll like him better when you know him better—I'm sure you will!"

Miss Milroy made a little grimace, implying supreme indifference to Midwinter, and saucy surprise at Allan's earnest advocacy of the merits of his friend. "Has he got nothing more interesting to say to me than *that*," she wondered, privately, "after kissing my hand twice yesterday morning?"

They were all in the major's workroom before Allan had the chance of trying a more attractive subject. There, on the top of a rough wooden case, which evidently contained the machinery, was the wonderful clock. The dial was crowned by a glass pedestal placed on rockwork in carved ebony; and on the top of the pedestal sat the inevitable figure of Time, with his everlasting scythe in his hand. Below the dial was a little platform, and at either end of it rose two miniature sentry-boxes, with closed doors. Externally, this was all that appeared, until the magic moment came when the clock struck twelve at noon.

It wanted then about three minutes to twelve; and Major Milroy seized the opportunity of explaining what the exhibition was to be, before the exhibition began. At the first words, his mind fell back again into its old absorption over the one employment of his life. He turned to Midwinter (who had persisted in talking all the way from the parlour, and who was talking still) without a trace left in his manner of the cool and cutting composure with which he had spoken but a few minutes before. The noisy, familiar man, who had been an ill-bred intruder in the parlour, became a privileged guest in the workshop—for *there* he possessed the all-atoning social advantage of being new to the performances of the wonderful clock.

"At the first stroke of twelve, Mr. Midwinter," said the major, quite eagerly, "keep your eye on the figure of Time: he will move his scythe, and point it downwards to the glass pedestal. You will next see a little printed card appear behind the glass, which will tell you the day of the month and the day of the week. At the last stroke of the clock, Time will lift his scythe again into its former position, and the chimes will ring a peal. The peal will be succeeded by the playing of a tune—the favourite march of my old regiment—and then the final performance of the clock will follow. The sentry-boxes, which you may observe at each side, will both open at the same moment. In one of them you will see the sentinel appear; and, from the other, a corporal and two privates will march across the platform to relieve the guard, and will then disappear, leaving the new sentinel at his post. I must ask your kind allowances for this last part of the performance. The machinery is a little complicated, and there are defects in it which I am ashamed to say I have not yet succeeded in remedying as I could wish. Sometimes the figures go all

wrong, and sometimes they go all right. I hope they may do their best on the occasion of your seeing them for the first time."

As the major, posted near his clock, said the last words, his little audience of three, assembled at the opposite end of the room, saw the hour-hand and the minute-hand on the dial point together to twelve. The first stroke sounded, and Time, true to the signal, moved his scythe. The day of the month and the day of the week announced themselves in print through the glass pedestal next; Midwinter applauding their appearance with a noisy exaggeration of surprise, which Miss Milroy mistook for coarse sarcasm directed at her father's pursuits, and which Allan (seeing that she was offended) attempted to moderate by touching the elbow of his friend. Meanwhile, the performances of the clock went on. At the last stroke of twelve, Time lifted his scythe again, the chimes rang, the march tune of the major's old regiment followed; and the crowning exhibition of the relief of the guard announced itself in a preliminary trembling of the sentry-boxes, and a sudden disappearance of the major at the back of the clock.

The performance began with the opening of the sentry-box on the right-hand side of the platform, as punctually as could be desired; the door on the other side, however, was less tractable—it remained obstinately closed. Unaware of this hitch in the proceedings, the corporal and his two privates appeared in their places in a state of perfect discipline, tottered out across the platform, all three trembling in every limb, dashed themselves headlong against the closed door on the other side, and failed in producing the smallest impression on the immovable sentry presumed to be within. An intermittent clicking, as of the major's keys and tools at work, was heard in the machinery. The corporal and his two privates suddenly returned, backwards, across the platform, and shut themselves up with a bang inside their own door. Exactly at the same moment, the other door opened for the first time, and the provoking sentry appeared with the utmost deliberation at his post, waiting to be relieved. He was allowed to wait. Nothing happened in the other box but an occasional knocking inside the door, as if the corporal and his privates were impatient to be let out. The clicking of the major's tools was heard again among the machinery; the corporal and his party, suddenly restored to liberty, appeared in a violent hurry, and spun furiously across the platform. Quick as they were, however, the hitherto deliberate sentry on the other side, now perfectly showed himself to be quicker still. He disappeared like lightning into his own premises, the door closed smartly after him, the corporal and his privates dashed themselves headlong against it for the second time, and the major appearing again round the corner of the clock, asked his audience innocently, "if they would be good enough to tell him whether anything had gone wrong?"

The fantastic absurdity of the exhibition, heightened by Major Milroy's grave inquiry at the end of it, was so irresistibly ludicrous that the visitors shouted with laughter; and even Miss Milroy, with all her

consideration for her father's sensitive pride in his cloak, could not restrain herself from joining in the merriment which the catastrophe of the puppets had provoked. But there are limits even to the licence of laughter; and these limits were ere long so outrageously overstepped by one of the little party as to have the effect of almost instantly silencing the other two. The fever of Midwinter's false spirits flamed out into sheer delirium as the performance of the puppets came to an end. His paroxysms of laughter followed each other with such convulsive violence, that Miss Milroy started back from him in alarm, and even the patient major turned on him with a look which said plainly, *Leave the room!* Allan, wisely impulsive for once in his life, seized Midwinter by the arm, and dragged him out by main force into the garden, and thence into the park beyond.

"Good heavens! what has come to you!" he exclaimed, shrinking back from the tortured face before him, as he stopped and looked close at it for the first time.

For the moment, Midwinter was incapable of answering. The hysterical paroxysm was passing from one extreme to the other. He leaned against a tree, sobbing and gasping for breath, and stretched out his hand in mute entreaty to Allan to give him time.

"You had better not have nursed me through my fever," he said faintly, as soon as he could speak. "I'm mad and miserable, Allan—I have never recovered it. Go back, and ask them to forgive me; I am ashamed to go and ask them myself. I can't tell how it happened—I can only ask your pardon and theirs." He turned aside his head quickly so as to conceal his face. "Don't stop here," he said; "don't look at me—I shall soon get over it." Allan still hesitated, and begged hard to be allowed to take him back to the house. It was useless. "You break my heart with your kindness," he burst out passionately. "For God's sake leave me by myself!"

Allan went back to the cottage, and pleaded there for indulgence to Midwinter, with an earnestness and simplicity which raised him immensely in the major's estimation, but which totally failed to produce the same favourable impression on Miss Milroy. Little as she herself suspected it, she was fond enough of Allan already to be jealous of Allan's friend.

"How excessively absurd!" she thought, pettishly. "As if either papa or I considered such a person of the slightest consequence!"

"You will kindly suspend your opinion, won't you, Major Milroy?" said Allan, in his hearty way, at parting.

"With the greatest pleasure!" replied the major, cordially shaking hands.

"And you, too, Miss Milroy?" added Allan.

Miss Milroy made a mercilessly formal bow. "My opinion, Mr. Armadale, is not of the slightest consequence."

Allan left the cottage, sorely puzzled to account for Miss Milroy's sudden coolness towards him. His grand idea of conciliating the whole neighbourhood by becoming a married man, underwent some modification

as he closed the garden-gate behind him. The virtue called Prudence and the Squire of Thorpe-Ambrose became personally acquainted with each other, on this occasion, for the first time ; and Allan, entering headlong as usual on the high-road to moral improvement, actually decided on doing nothing in a hurry !

A man who is entering on a course of reformation ought, if virtue is its own reward, to be a man engaged in an essentially inspiriting pursuit. But virtue is not always its own reward ; and the way that leads to reformation is remarkably ill-lighted for so respectable a thoroughfare. Allan seemed to have caught the infection of his friend's despondency. As he walked home, he, too, began to doubt—in his widely-different way, and for his widely-different reasons—whether the life at Thorpe-Ambrose was promising quite as fairly for the future as it had promised at first.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

Two messages were waiting for Allan when he returned to the house. One had been left by Midwinter. "He had gone out for a long walk, and Mr. Armadale was not to be alarmed if he did not get back till late in the day." The other message had been left by "a person from Mr. Pedgiff's office," who had called, according to appointment, while the two gentlemen were away at the major's. "Mr. Bashwood's respects, and he would have the honour of waiting on Mr. Armadale again, in the course of the evening."

Towards five o'clock, Midwinter returned, pale and silent. Allan hastened to assure him that his peace was made at the cottage ; and then, to change the subject, mentioned Mr. Bashwood's message. Midwinter's mind was so pre-occupied or so languid, that he hardly seemed to remember the name. Allan was obliged to remind him that Bushwood was the elderly clerk, whom Mr. Pedgiff had sent to be his instructor in the duties of the steward's office. He listened without making any remark, and withdrew to his room, to rest till dinner-time.

Lest by himself, Allan went into the library, to try if he could while away the time over a book. He took many volumes off the shelves, and put a few of them back again—and there he ended. Miss Milroy contrived in some mysterious manner to get, in this case, between the reader and the books. Her formal bow, and her merciless parting speech, dwelt, try how he might to forget them, on Allan's mind ; he began to grow more and more anxious as the idle hour wore on, to recover his lost place in her favour. To call again that day at the cottage, and ask if he had been so unfortunate as to offend her, was impossible. To put the question in writing with the needful nicety of expression, proved, on trying the experiment, to be a task beyond his literary reach. After a turn or two

up and down the room, with his pen in his mouth, he decided on the more diplomatic course (which happened, in this case, to be the easiest course too), of writing to Miss Milroy as cordially as if nothing had happened, and of testing his position in her good graces by the answer that she sent him back. An invitation of some kind (including her father, of course, but addressed directly to herself) was plainly the right thing to oblige her to send a written reply—but here the difficulty occurred of what the invitation was to be. A ball was not to be thought of, in his present position with the resident gentry. A dinner-party, with no indispensable elderly lady on the premises to receive Miss Milroy—except Mrs. Gripper, who could only receive her in the kitchen—was equally out of the question. What was the invitation to be? Never backward, when he wanted help, in asking for it right and left in every available direction, Allan, feeling himself at the end of his own resources, coolly rang the bell, and astonished the servant who answered it, by inquiring how the late family at Thorpe-Ambrose used to amuse themselves, and what sort of invitations they were in the habit of sending to their friends.

"The family did what the rest of the gentry did, sir," said the man, staring at his master in utter bewilderment. "They gave dinner-parties and balls. And, in fine summer weather, sir, like this, they sometimes had lawn-parties and picnics——"

"That'll do!" shouted Allan. "A picnic's just the thing to please her. Richard, you're an invaluable man—you may go downstairs again."

Richard retired wondering, and Richard's master seized his ready pen.

"DEAR MISS MILROY,—Since I left you, it has suddenly struck me that we might have a picnic. A little change and amusement (what I should call a good shaking-up, if I wasn't writing to a young lady) is just the thing for you, after being so long indoors lately in Mrs. Milroy's room. A picnic is a change, and (when the wine is good) amusement too. Will you ask the major if he will consent to the picnic, and come? And if you have got any friends in the neighbourhood who like a picnic, pray ask them too—for I have got none. It shall be your picnic, but I will provide everything and take everybody. You shall choose the day, and we will picnic where you like. I have set my heart on this picnic.

"Believe me, ever yours,

"ALLAN ARMADALE."

On reading over his composition, before sealing it up, Allan frankly acknowledged to himself, this time, that it was not quite faultless. "'Picnic' comes in a little too often," he said. "Never mind—if she likes the idea, she won't quarrel with that." He sent off the letter on the spot, with strict instructions to the messenger to wait for a reply.

In half-an-hour the answer came back on scented paper, without an erasure anywhere, fragrant to smell and beautiful to see.

The presentation of the naked truth is one of those exhibitions from which the native delicacy of the female mind seems instinctively to revolt.

Never were the tables turned more completely than they were now turned on Allan by his fair correspondent. Machiavelli himself would never have suspected, from Miss Milroy's letter, how heartily she had repented her petulance to the young squire as soon as his back was turned, and how extravagantly delighted she was when his invitation was placed in her hands. Her letter was the composition of a model young lady whose emotions are all kept under parental lock and key, and served out for her judiciously as occasion may require. "Papa" appeared quite as frequently in Miss Milroy's reply as "picnic" had appeared in Allan's invitation. "Papa" had been as considerately kind as Mr. Armadale, in wishing to procure her a little change and amusement, and had offered to forego his usual quiet habits, and join the picnic. With "papa's" sanction, therefore, she accepted, with much pleasure, Mr. Armadale's proposal; and, at "papa's" suggestion, she would presume on Mr. Armadale's kindness, to add two friends of theirs, recently settled at Thorpe-Ambrose, to the picnic party—a widow lady and her son; the latter in holy orders, and in delicate health. If Tuesday next would suit Mr. Armadale, Tuesday next would suit "papa"—being the first day he could spare from repairs which were required by his clock. The rest, by "papa's" advice, she would beg to leave entirely in Mr. Armadale's hands; and, in the meantime, she would remain, with "papa's" compliments, Mr. Armadale's truly—"ELEANOR MILROY." Who would ever have supposed that the writer of that letter had jumped for joy when Allan's invitation arrived? Who would ever have suspected that there was an entry already in Miss Milroy's diary, under that day's date, to this effect:—"The sweetest, dearest letter from *I-know-who*; I'll never behave unkindly to him again as long as I live?" As for Allan, he was charmed with the success of his manoeuvre. Miss Milroy had accepted his invitation—consequently, Miss Milroy was not offended with him. It was on the tip of his tongue to mention the correspondence to his friend when they met at dinner. But there was something in Midwinter's face and manner (even plain enough for Allan to see) which warned him to wait a little before he said anything to revive the painful subject of their visit to the cottage. By common consent they both avoided all topics connected with Thorpe-Ambrose—not even the visit from Mr. Bashwood, which was to come with the evening, being referred to by either of them. All through the dinner they drifted farther and farther back into the old endless talk of past times about ships and sailing. When the butler withdrew from his attendance at table, he came downstairs with a nautical problem on his mind, and asked his fellow-servants if they any of them knew the relative merits "on a wind," and "off a wind," of a schooner and a brig.

The two young men had sat longer at table than usual that day. When they went out into the garden, with their cigars, the summer twilight fell grey and dim on lawn and flower-bed, and narrowed round them by slow degrees the softly-fading circle of the distant view. The

dew was heavy ; and, after a few minutes in the garden, they agreed to go back to the drier ground on the drive in front of the house.

They were close to the turning which led into the shrubbery, when there suddenly glided out on them, from behind the foliage, a softly-stepping black figure—a shadow, moving darkly through the dim evening light. Midwinter started back at the sight of it, and even the less finely-strung nerves of his friend were shaken for the moment.

"Who the devil are you !" cried Allan.

The figure bared its head in the grey light, and came slowly a step nearer. Midwinter advanced a step on his side, and looked closer. It was the man of the timid manners and the mourning garments, of whom he had asked the way to Thorpe-Ambrose where the three roads met.

"Who are you ?" repeated Allan.

"I humbly beg your pardon, sir," faltered the stranger, stepping back again confusedly. "The servants told me I should find Mr. Armadale——"

"What, are you Mr. Bashwood ?"

"Yes, if you please, sir."

"I beg your pardon for speaking to you so roughly," said Allan, "but the fact is, you rather startled me. My name is Armadale (put on your hat, pray), and this is my friend, Mr. Midwinter, who wants your help in the steward's office."

"We hardly stand in need of an introduction," said Midwinter. "I met Mr. Bashwood out walking a few days since, and he was kind enough to direct me when I had lost my way."

"Put on your hat," reiterated Allan, as Mr. Bashwood, still bare-headed, stood bowing speechlessly, now to one of the young men, and now to the other. "My good sir, put on your hat, and let me show you the way back to the house. Excuse me for noticing it," added Allan, as the man, in sheer nervous helplessness, let his hat fall, instead of putting it back on his head; "but you seem a little out of sorts—a glass of good wine will do you no harm before you and my friend come to business. Whereabouts did you meet with Mr. Bashwood, Midwinter, when you lost your way ?"

"I am too ignorant of the neighbourhood to know. I must refer you to Mr. Bashwood."

"Come, tell us where it was," said Allan, trying, a little too abruptly, to set the man at his ease, as they all three walked back to the house.

The measure of Mr. Bashwood's constitutional timidity seemed to be filled to the brim by the loudness of Allan's voice, and the bluntness of Allan's request. He ran over in the same feeble flow of words with which he had deluged Midwinter on the occasion when they first met.

"It was on the road, sir," he began, addressing himself alternately to Allan, whom he called "sir," and to Midwinter, whom he called by his name; "I mean, if you please, on the road to Little Gill Beck. A singular road, Mr. Midwinter, and a singular place ; I don't mean the

village ; I mean the neighbourhood—I beg your pardon, I mean the ‘Broads,’ beyond the neighbourhood. Perhaps you may have heard of the Norfolk Broads, sir ? What they call lakes in other parts of England, they call Broads here. The Broads are quite numerous ; I think they would repay a visit. You would have seen the first of them, Mr. Midwinter, if you had walked on a few miles from where I had the honour of meeting you. Remarkably numerous, the Broads, sir—situated between this and the sea. About three miles from the sea, Mr. Midwinter,—about three miles. Mostly shallow, sir, with rivers running between them. Beautiful; solitary. Quite a watery country, Mr. Midwinter ; quite separate as it were, in itself. Parties sometimes visit them, sir,—pleasure-parties in boats. It’s quite a little network of lakes, or, perhaps,—yes, perhaps more correctly, pools. There is good sport in the cold weather. The wild-fowl are quite numerous. Yea. The Broads would repay a visit, Mr. Midwinter, the next time you are walking that way. The distance from here to Little Gill Beck, and then from Little Gill Beck to Girdler Broad, which is the first you come to, is altogether not more——” In sheer nervous inability to leave off, he would apparently have gone on talking of the Norfolk Broads for the rest of the evening, if one of his two listeners had not unceremoniously cut him short before he could find his way into a new sentence.

“ Are the Broads within an easy day’s drive there and back, from this house ? ” asked Allan ; feeling, if they were, that the place for the picnic was discovered already.

“ Oh, yes, sir ; a nice drive—quite a nice easy drive from this beautiful place ! ”

They were by this time ascending the portico steps ; Allan leading the way up, and calling to Midwinter and Mr. Bashwood to follow him into the library, where there was a lighted lamp. In the interval which elapsed before the wine made its appearance, Midwinter looked at his chance acquaintance of the high-road with strangely-mingled feelings of compassion and distrust—of compassion that strengthened in spite of him ; of distrust that persisted in diminishing, try as he might to encourage it to grow. There, perched comfortless on the edge of his chair, sat the poor broken-down nervous wretch, in his worn black garments, with his watery eyes, his honest old outspoken wig, his miserable mohair stock, and his false teeth that were incapable of deceiving anybody—there he sat, politely ill at ease ; now shrinking in the glare of the lamp, now wincing under the shock of Allan’s sturdy voice ; a man with the wrinkles of sixty years in his face, and the manners of a child in the presence of strangers ; an object of pity surely, if ever there was a pitiable object yet !

“ Whatever else you’re afraid of, Mr. Bashwood,” cried Allan, pouring out a glass of wine, “ don’t be afraid of that ! There isn’t a headache in a boghead of it ! Make yourself comfortable ; I’ll leave you and Mr. Midwinter to talk your business over by yourselves. It’s all in Mr. Midwinter’s hands ; he acts for me, and settles everything at his own discretion.”

He said those words with a cautious choice of expression very uncharacteristic of him, and without further explanation, made abruptly for the door. Midwinter, sitting near it, noticed his face as he went out. Easy as the way was into Allan's favour, Mr. Bashwood, beyond all kind of doubt, had in some unaccountable manner failed to find it!

The two strangely-assorted companions were left together—parted widely, as it seemed on the surface, from any possible interchange of sympathy; drawn invisibly one to the other, nevertheless, by those magnetic similarities of temperament which overleap all difference of age or station, and defy all apparent incongruities of mind and character. From the moment when Allan left the room, the hidden Influence that works in darkness began slowly to draw the two men together, across the great social desert which had lain between them up to this day.

Midwinter was the first to approach the subject of the interview.

"May I ask," he began, "if you have been made acquainted with my position here, and if you know why it is that I require your assistance?"

Mr. Bashwood—still hesitating and still timid, but manifestly relieved by Allan's departure—sat farther back in his chair, and ventured on fortifying himself with a modest little sip of wine.

"Yes, sir," he replied; "Mr. Pedgiff informed me of all—at least I think I may say so—of all the circumstances. I am to instruct, or perhaps I ought to say to advise—"

"No, Mr. Bashwood; the first word was the best word of the two. I am quite ignorant of the duties which Mr. Armadale's kindness has induced him to intrust to me. If I understand right, there can be no question of your capacity to instruct me, for you once filled a steward's situation yourself. May I inquire where it was?"

"At Sir John Mellowhip's, sir, in West Norfolk. Perhaps you would like—I have got it with me—to see my testimonial? Sir John might have dealt more kindly with me—but I have no complaint to make; it's all done and over now!" His watery eyes looked more watery still, and the trembling in his hands spread to his lips as he produced an old dingy letter from his pocket-book, and laid it open on the table.

The testimonial was very briefly and very coldly expressed, but it was conclusive as far as it went. Sir John considered it only right to say that he had no complaint to make of any want of capacity or integrity in his steward. If Mr. Bashwood's domestic position had been compatible with the continued performance of his duties on the estate, Sir John would have been glad to keep him. As it was, embarrassments caused by the state of Mr. Bashwood's personal affairs had rendered it undesirable that he should continue in Sir John's service; and on that ground, and that only, his employer and he had parted. Such was Sir John's testimony to Mr. Bashwood's character. As Midwinter read the last lines, he thought of another testimonial, still in his own possession of the written character which they had given him at the school, when

they turned their sick usher adrift in the world. His superstition (distrusting all new events and all new faces at Thorpe-Ambrose) still doubted the man before him as obstinately as ever. But when he now tried to put those doubts into words, his heart upbraided him, and he laid the letter on the table in silence.

The sudden pause in the conversation appeared to startle Mr. Bashwood. He comforted himself with another little sip of wine, and, leaving the letter untouched, burst irrepressibly into words, as if the silence was quite unendurable to him.

"I am ready to answer any question, sir," he began. "Mr. Pedgitt told me that I must answer questions, because I was applying for a place of trust. Mr. Pedgitt said, neither you nor Mr. Armadale were likely to think the testimonial sufficient of itself. Sir John doesn't say—he might have put it more kindly, but I don't complain—Sir John doesn't say what the troubles were that lost me my place. Perhaps you might wish to know——?" He stopped confusedly, looked at the testimonial, and said no more.

"If no interests but mine were concerned in the matter," rejoined Midwinter, "the testimonial would, I assure you, be quite enough to satisfy me. But while I am learning my new duties, the person who teaches me will be really and truly the steward of my friend's estate. I am very unwilling to ask you to speak on what may be a painful subject, and I am sadly inexperienced in putting such questions as I ought to put, but perhaps, in Mr. Armadale's interests, I ought to know something more, either from yourself, or from Mr. Pedgitt, if you prefer it——" He, too, stopped confusedly, looked at the testimonial, and said no more.

There was another moment of silence. The night was warm, and Mr. Bashwood, among his other misfortunes, had the deplorable infirmity of perspiring at the palms of the hands. He took out a miserable little cotton pocket-handkerchief, rolled it up into a ball, and softly dabbed it up and down, from one hand to the other, with the regularity of a pendulum. Performed by other men, under other circumstances, the action might have been ridiculous. Performed by this man, at the crisis of the interview, the action was horrible.

"Mr. Pedgitt's time is too valuable, sir, to be wasted on me," he said. "I will mention what ought to be mentioned myself—if you will please to allow me. I have been unfortunate in my family. It was very hard to bear, though it seems not much to tell. My wife——" One of his hands closed fast on the pocket-handkerchief; he moistened his dry lips, struggled with himself, and went on.

"My wife, sir," he resumed, "stood a little in my way; she did me (I am afraid I must confess) some injury with Sir John. Soon after I got the steward's situation she contracted—she took—the fell into habits (I hardly know how to say it) of drinking. I couldn't break her of it, and I couldn't always conceal it from Sir John's knowledge. She broke out, and—and—tried his patience once or twice, when he came to my

office on business. Sir John excused it, not very kindly ; but still he excused it. I don't complain of Sir John ; I—I don't complain, now, of my wife." He pointed a trembling finger at his miserable crape-covered beaver hat on the floor. "I'm in mourning for her," he said, faintly. "She died nearly a year ago, in the county asylum here."

His mouth began to work convulsively. He took up the glass of wine at his side, and, instead of sipping it this time, drained it to the bottom. "I'm not much used to wine, sir," he said, conscious, apparently, of the flush that flew into his face as he drank, and still observant of the obligations of politeness amid all the misery of the recollections that he was calling up.

"I beg, Mr. Bashwood, you will not distress yourself by telling me any more," said Midwinter, recoiling from any further sanction on his part of a disclosure which had already bared the sorrows of the unhappy man before him to the quick.

"I'm much obliged to you, sir," replied Mr. Bashwood. "But if I don't detain you too long, and if you will please to remember that Mr. Pedgiff's directions to me were very particular—and, besides, I only mentioned my late wife because if she hadn't tried Sir John's patience to begin with, things might have turned out differently—" He paused, gave up the disjointed sentence in which he had involved himself, and tried another. "I had only two children, sir," he went on, advancing to a new point in his narrative; "a boy and a girl. The girl died when she was a baby. My son lived to grow up—and it was my son who lost me my place. I did my best for him; I got him into a respectable office in London. They wouldn't take him without security. I'm afraid it was imprudent; but I had no rich friends to help me—and I became security. My boy turned out badly, sir. He—perhaps you will kindly understand what I mean, if I say he behaved dishonestly. His employers consented, at my entreaty, to let him off without prosecuting. I begged very hard—I was fond of my son James—and I took him home, and did my best to reform him. He wouldn't stay with me; he went away again to London; he—I beg your pardon, sir! I'm afraid I'm confusing things; I'm afraid I'm wandering from the point?"

"No, no," said Midwinter, kindly. "If you think it right to tell me this sad story, tell it in your own way. Have you seen your son since he left you to go to London?"

"No, sir. He's in London still, for all I know. When I last heard of him, he was getting his bread—not very creditably. He was employed, under the Inspector, at the Private Inquiry Office in Shadyside Place."

He spoke those words—apparently (as events then stood) the most irrelevant to the matter in hand that had yet escaped him; actually (as events were soon to be) the most vitally important that he had uttered yet—he spoke those words absently, looking about him in confusion, and trying vainly to recover the lost thread of his narrative.

Midwinter compassionately helped him. "You were telling me," he

said, "that your son had been the cause of your losing your place. How did that happen?"

"In this way, sir," said Mr. Bashwood, getting back again excitedly into the right train of thought. "His employers consented to let him off—but they came down on his security; and I was the man. I suppose they were not to blame; the security covered their loss. I couldn't pay it all out of my savings; I had to borrow—on the word of a man, sir, I couldn't help it—I had to borrow. My creditor pressed me; it seemed cruel, but, if he wanted the money, I suppose it was only just. I was sold out of house and home. I daresay other gentlemen would have said what Sir John said; I daresay most people would have refused to keep a steward who had had the bailiffs after him, and his furniture sold in the neighbourhood. That was how it ended, Mr. Midwinter. I needn't detain you any longer—here is Sir John's address, if you wish to apply to him."

Midwinter generously refused to receive the address.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said Mr. Bashwood, getting tremulously on his legs. "There is nothing more, I think, except—except that Mr. Pedgiff will speak for me, if you wish to inquire into my conduct in his service. I'm very much indebted to Mr. Pedgiff; he's a little rough with me sometimes, but if he hadn't taken me into his office, I think I should have gone to the workhouse when I left Sir John, I was so broken-down." He picked up his dingy old hat from the floor. "I won't intrude any longer, sir. I shall be happy to call again, if you wish to have time to consider before you decide."

"I want no time to consider, after what you have told me," replied Midwinter warmly, his memory busy, while he spoke, with the time when he had told his story to Mr. Brock, and was waiting for a generous word in return, as the man before him was waiting now. "To-day is Saturday," he went on. "Can you come and give me my first lesson on Monday morning? I beg your pardon," he added, interrupting Mr. Bashwood's profuse expressions of acknowledgment, and stopping him on his way out of the room; "there is one thing we ought to settle, ought we not? We haven't spoken yet about your own interest in this matter—I mean, about the terms." He referred a little confusedly to 'the pecuniary part of the subject. Mr. Bashwood (getting nearer and nearer to the door) answered him more confusedly still.

"Anything, sir—anything you think right. I won't intrude any longer—I'll leave it to you and Mr. Armadale."

"I will send for Mr. Armadale, if you like," said Midwinter, following him into the hall. "But I am afraid he has as little experience in matters of this kind as I have. Perhaps, if you see no objection, we might be guided by Mr. Pedgiff?"

Mr. Bashwood caught eagerly at the last suggestion, pushing his retreat, while he spoke, as far as the front door. "Yes, sir—oh, yes, yes! nobody better than Mr. Pedgiff. Don't—pray don't, disturb Mr. Armadale!" His watery eyes looked quite wild with nervous alarm as

he turned round for a moment in the light of the hall-lamp, to make that polite request. If sending for Allan had been equivalent to unchaining a ferocious watch-dog, Mr. Bashwood could hardly have been more anxious to stop the proceeding. "I wish you kindly good evening, sir," he went on, getting out to the steps. "I'm much obliged to you I will be scrupulously punctual on Monday morning—I hope—I think—I'm sure you will soon learn everything I can teach you. It's not difficult—oh, dear, no—not difficult at all! I wish you kindly good evening, sir. A beautiful night; yes, indeed, a beautiful night for a walk home."

With those words, all dropping out of his lips one on the top of the other, and without noticing, in his agony of embarrassment at effecting his departure, Midwinter's outstretched hand, he went noiselessly down the steps, and was lost in the darkness of the night.

As Midwinter turned to re-enter the house, the dining-room door opened, and his friend met him in the hall.

"Has Mr. Bashwood gone?" asked Allan.

"He has gone," replied Midwinter, "after telling me a very sad story, and leaving me a little ashamed of myself for having doubted him without any just cause. I have arranged that he is to give me my first lesson in the steward's office on Monday morning."

"All right," said Allan. "You needn't be afraid, old boy, of my interrupting you over your studies. I daresay I'm wrong—but I don't like Mr. Bashwood."

"I daresay *I'm* wrong," retorted the other, a little petulantly. "I do."

The Sunday morning found Midwinter in the park, waiting to intercept the postman, on the chance of his bringing more news from Mr. Brock.

At the customary hour the man made his appearance, and placed the expected letter in Midwinter's hands. He opened it, far away from all fear of observation this time, and read these lines:—

"**MY DEAR MIDWINTER,**—I write more for the purpose of quieting your anxiety than because I have anything definite to say. In my last hurried letter I had no time to tell you that the elder of the two women whom I met in the Gardens had followed me, and spoken to me in the street. I believe I may characterize what she said (without doing her any injustice) as a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end. At any rate, she confirmed me in the suspicion that some underhand proceeding is on foot, of which Allan is destined to be the victim, and that the prime mover in the conspiracy is the vile woman who helped his mother's marriage and who hastened his mother's death.

"Feeling this conviction, I have not hesitated to do, for Allan's sake, what I would have done for no other creature in the world. I have left my hotel, and have installed myself (with my old servant Robert) in a house opposite the house to which I traced the two women. We are alternately on the watch (quite unsuspected, I am certain, by the people opposite)

day and night. All my feelings, as a gentleman and a clergyman, revolt from such an occupation as I am now engaged in ; but there is no other choice. I must either do this violence to my own self-respect, or I must leave Allan, with his easy nature, and in his assailable position, to defend himself against a wretch who is prepared, I firmly believe, to take the most unscrupulous advantage of his weakness and his youth. His mother's dying entreaty has never left my memory ; and, God help me, I am now degrading myself in my own eyes in consequence.

" There has been some reward already for the sacrifice. This day (Saturday) I have gained an immense advantage—I have at last seen the woman's face. She went out with her veil down as before ; and Robert kept her in view, having my instructions, if she returned to the house, not to follow her back to the door. She did return to the house ; and the result of my precaution was, as I had expected, to throw her off her guard. I saw her face unveiled at the window, and afterwards again in the balcony. If any occasion should arise for describing her particularly, you shall have the description. At present I need only say that she looks the full age (five-and-thirty) at which you estimated her, and that she is by no means so handsome a woman as I had (I hardly know why) expected to see.

" This is all I can now tell you. If nothing more happens by Monday or Tuesday next, I shall have no choice but to apply to my lawyers for assistance ; though I am most unwilling to trust this delicate and dangerous matter in other hands than mine. Setting my own feelings, however, out of the question, the business which has been the cause of my journey to London is too important to be trifled with much longer as I am trifling with it now. In any and every case, depend on my keeping you informed of the progress of events ; and believe me

" Yours truly,

" DECEMUS BROCK."

Midwinter secured the letter as he had secured the letter that preceded it—side by side in his pocket-book with the narrative of Allan's Dream.

" How many days more ? " he asked himself, as he went back to the house. " How many days more ? "

Not many. The time he was waiting for, was a time close at hand.

Monday came, and brought Mr. Bashwood, punctual to the appointed hour. Monday came, and found Allan immersed in his preparations for the picnic. He held a series of interviews, at home and abroad, all through the day. He transacted business with Mrs. Gripper, with the butler, and with the coachman, in their three several departments of eating, drinking, and driving. He went to the town to consult his professional advisers on the subject of the Broads, and to invite both the lawyers, father and son (in the absence of anybody else in the neighbourhood whom he could ask), to join the picnic. Pedigree

Senior (in his department) supplied general information, but begged to be excused from appearing at the picnic, on the score of business engagements. Pedgiff Junior (in his department) added all the details; and, casting business engagements to the winds, accepted the invitation with the greatest pleasure. Returning from the lawyer's office, Allan's next proceeding was to go to the major's cottage and obtain Miss Milroy's approval of the proposed locality for the pleasure-party. This object accomplished, he returned to his own house, to meet the last difficulty now left to encounter—the difficulty of persuading Midwinter to join the expedition to the Broads.

On first broaching the subject, Allan found his friend impenetrably resolute to remain at home. Midwinter's natural reluctance to meet the major and his daughter, after what had happened at the cottage, might probably have been overcome. But Midwinter's determination not to allow Mr. Bashwood's course of instruction to be interrupted, was proof against every effort that could be made to shake it. After exerting his influence to the utmost, Allan was obliged to remain contented with a compromise. Midwinter promised, not very willingly, to join the party towards evening, at the place appointed for a gipsy tea-making, which was to close the proceedings of the day. To this extent he would consent to take the opportunity of placing himself on a friendly footing with the Milroys. More he could not concede, even to Allan's persuasion, and for more it would be useless to ask.

The day of the picnic came. The lovely morning, and the cheerful bustle of preparation for the expedition, failed entirely to tempt Midwinter into altering his resolution. At the regular hour he left the breakfast-table to join Mr. Bashwood in the steward's office. The two were quietly closeted over the books, at the back of the house, while the packing for the picnic went on in front. Young Pedgiff (short in stature, smart in costume, and self-reliant in manner) arrived some little time before the hour for starting, to revise all the arrangements, and to make any final improvements which his local knowledge might suggest. Allan and he were still busy in consultation when the first hitch occurred in the proceedings. The woman-servant from the cottage was reported to be waiting below for an answer to a note from her young mistress, which was placed in Allan's hands.

On this occasion Miss Milroy's emotions had apparently got the better of her sense of propriety. The tone of the letter was feverish, and the handwriting wandered crookedly up and down, in deplorable freedom from all proper restraint.

"Oh, Mr. Armadale" (wrote the major's daughter), "such a misfortune! What are we to do? Papa has got a letter from grandmamma this morning about the new governess. Her reference has answered all the questions, and she's ready to come at the shortest notice. Grandmamma thinks (how provoking!) the sooner the better; and she says we may expect her—I mean the governess—either to-day or to-morrow. Papa says (he

will be so absurdly considerate to everybody !) that we can't allow Miss Gwilt to come here (if she comes to-day) and find nobody at home to receive her. What is to be done ? I am ready to cry with vexation. I have got the worst possible impression (though grandmamma says she is a charming person) of Miss Gwilt. Can you suggest something, dear Mr. Armadale ? I'm sure papa would give way if you could. Don't stop to write—send me a message back. I have got a new hat for the picnic ; and, oh, the agony of not knowing whether I am to keep it on or take it off.—Yours truly, E. M."

"The devil take Miss Gwilt !" said Allan, staring at his legal adviser in a state of helpless consternation.

"With all my heart, sir—I don't wish to interfere," remarked Pedgist Junior. "May I ask what's the matter ?"

Allan told him. Mr. Pedgist the Younger might have his faults, but a want of quickness of resource was not among them.

"There's a way out of the difficulty, Mr. Armadale," he said. "If the governess comes to-day, let's have her at the picnic."

Allan's eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"All the horses and carriages in the Thorpe-Ambrose stables are not wanted for this small party of ours," proceeded Pedgist Junior. "Of course not ! Very good. If Miss Gwilt comes to-day, she can't possibly get here before five o'clock. Good again. You order an open carriage to be waiting at the major's door at that time, Mr. Armadale ; and I'll give the man his directions where to drive to. When the governess comes to the cottage, let her find a nice little note of apology (along with the cold fowl, or whatever else they give her after her journey) begging her to join us at the picnic, and putting a carriage at her own sole disposal to take her there. Gad, sir !" said young Pedgist, gaily, "she must be a Touchy One if she thinks herself neglected after that !"

"Capital !" cried Allan. "She shall have every attention. I'll give her the pony-chaise and the white harness, and she shall drive herself, if she likes."

He scribbled a line to relieve Miss Milroy's apprehensions, and gave the necessary orders for the pony-chaise. Ten minutes later, the carriages for the pleasure-party were at the door.

"Now we've taken all this trouble about her," said Allan, reverting to the governess as they left the house, "I wonder, if she does come to-day, whether we shall see her at the picnic !"

"Depends entirely on her age, sir," remarked young Pedgist, pronouncing judgment with the happy confidence in himself which eminently distinguished him. "If she's an old one, she'll be knocked up with the journey, and she'll stick to the cold fowl and the cottage. If she's a young one, either I know nothing of women, or the pony in the white harness will bring her to the picnic."

They started for the major's cottage.

Machinery and the Passions.

MODERN civilization, as the words are commonly used, is certainly the most grandiloquent phrase now current. It has, however, a specific meaning, which, if we cannot define, we may indicate. What does modern civilization imply? The advance of science and the diffusion of knowledge—artistic culture, and the increase of material comfort arising from the development of manufactures and commerce, and the progress of political liberty. This is the finely confused answer generally given, but, unless I am mistaken, it does not quite bring out the special point. By civilization we do not so much mean alterations of our surroundings as a modification of ourselves. The matters above mentioned may be the means, but it is the result in which they issue which is sought to be described. Men are growing more civilized, we glibly say, and the primary signification of the words, I submit, is that men are becoming milder. This is the view I propose to consider, with the purpose of showing that there is in modern times an increasing tendency towards restricting the exercise of the human passions, and that, in consequence, they are undergoing a progressive decline. Our criminal records continue to present cases of great individual atrocity, but no one will argue that the total amount of violence is not proportionately less; and I believe that, as a rule, even the worst acts are now more kindly committed. Many of the grossest instances of modern crime we should refuse to accept as illustrations of passion, properly named. The wild madness brought on by the excessive use of alcoholic drinks is mere nervous excitement, abnormal cerebral action, specifically induced; while the fact that, now-a-days, so many persons cannot do the ancient deeds of violence without first artificially intoxicating themselves, is, in itself, suggestive of weakened impulses. Stimulants did not use to be needed for these deeds; sober passion was sufficient to carry a man through to any necessary length. Take, as a definite illustration, the feeling of revenge. People still wish for revenge, but is it not sought in somewhat of a more Christian manner? In the ordinary way, an angry man would not now wish to include his opponent's children in his retaliation. Look, too, at modern war, and at our present treatment of criminals. Touches of amiability everywhere perplex and check our passions; when we rely on them they fail us, as it would appear, out of sheer weakness. Hero the issue is raised. Is this owing to increased action of the conscience, or does it result from an accumulating languor of the emotions? Without, at the outset, answering that question dogmatically, I venture to say it will be easy to show that the passions are necessarily becoming weakened, owing to inaction arising

from mechanical causes, apart from the restraints of moral influences. A vague impression exists, as we know, that this softening of character is to be attributed to the progress of religious feeling. Ecclesiastical history, however, demonstrates that a vigorous action of the passions is not inconsistent with religion. To quote the most striking instances of virulent animosity, we should, indeed, have to go to the records of theologic strife. We are, consequently, led to attribute this modification of human disposition to more specific causes; and the question arises, whether a lay civilization, so to speak, distinguishable from the operations of religious sentiment, is not resulting from the action of certain mechanical combinations, the necessary effect of which is to abate the play of the passions? If this be so, it is not a matter to disturb religious teachers, but, instead, to reassure them. Archbishop, bishop, dean and the whole chapter, will gladly welcome the circumstance as affording a prospect that, by and by, religion will have freer scope. Hitherto, it has been hindered at every step by the too excessive play of the stronger emotions. The most notable cause at the bottom of this mechanic reformation is, I think, the introduction of steam machinery.

Much has been said, in nearly every possible way, upon the influence of machinery on our material condition, but hitherto little notice has been taken of its moral effects in giving us new conceptions of action, and in disciplining the passions of those who have to do with it. The coupling of machinery and the human passions makes nearly as complete an antithesis as could be hit on. A steam-engine has no passions. Boilers only get heated by the process of putting fire underneath them. Pistons do not arbitrarily turn stupid, and occasionally stick fast out of sheer wilfulness. Valves have no moral sense, and never indulge in anger. The mechanical amiability of machinery is, in fact, perfect; its patience does not tire; unceasingly, night and day, it obeys. If a fly-wheel commit a seeming freak, you know it is only an apparent escapade, and that, in reality, there is a good reason for it. Who accuses spindles and shuttles of viciousness? Punishment, in the case of machines, is a ludicrous idea; nobody but a fool would resent their errors. When they go wrong, they must be calmly persuaded by hammer and chisel into better ways, but never used passionately. They, indeed, have a kind of quality which we can only liken to self-respect; and in their behaviour they are inflexibly just. Ill-treat one of them, and in the most impulsive manner it asserts itself. A harsh blow will stop it; and then you must coax back the bent rod, or the strained rivet, to just the same point before it again stirs. That done, it bears not the slightest resentment, but once more does your bidding, friendly as before. But if it displays this mechanical placability, it is only within definite limits, and moral sentiment it shows none. Machinery never weakly allows anything for unexpressed intentions, however good; and it never tolerates inefficiency of any sort. If the escape valve be neglected, even should the cause be the engineer forgetting himself in religious meditation, at a certain moment the boiler

blows up. Yet this is done with such impassibility that no wrath can be felt. The ruined engine, as it lies bent and torn, has an air of having itself suffered ill-usage in the performance of its duties, which appeals rather for sympathy, as though it had been betrayed by fools. Everybody, in a word, is practically reconciled to the conclusion, that it is worse than useless to indulge passion in dealing with machinery ; and the moral bearings of this fact are of the highest importance. For here, at last, we have a series of transactions daily going forward, to which man is a party, which must be conducted according to the rules of pure reason ; and I venture to think it a most suggestive reflection, that the inflexible conditions of the management of machinery exactly embody the principles of scientific morality. It is no irreverence, I hope, to say that the same rules regulating our intercourse with men as we recognize in having to do with machines would amount to a practical realization of Christianity towards one another. Let us quote two or three of the understood maxims which, in managing machinery, are always observed :—You must not expect all machines to act indifferently in the same way, but only in certain modes to which they are adapted ; you must, in addition to that limitation, attribute any wrong action to the existence of a disturbing cause, and must remove the one to prevent the other ; and you must never reckon on results until the processes necessary to secure them have been gone through. A child could tell you that the fly-wheel will never revolve till the piston has uplifted. If to this is added the permanent conviction on the part of all of us that in these cases the results are secured when the processes *are* gone through, thus leaving no room for hope or fear, any more than for anger, then, I think, it is made out that in dealing with machinery only the play of the intellect is necessarily involved, and that the express tendency of such occupation is to place the passions for the time in abeyance. It may, at first sight, seem only an attempt at an epigram to say that it might appear to be part of the providential scheme that, in having to do with machines, men should be compelled to practise the proper modes of dealing with one another. But apply the facts as we have stated them. Any moralist, if asked to what he attributes the misery of human life, would be certain virtually to assign, as among the great causes of it, specific infringements of the above rules in the intercourse betwixt man and man. One person, he would explain, insists on another acting in the same way as himself, although it be a mode of conduct for which the second has no adaptation. When we are disappointed at a course taken by another, we do not reflect that the step only proceeds from some cause so influencing him ; and in our general intercourse we wish to hurry results without waiting through the intermediate stages requisite for the action of the means. It is, therefore, no exaggeration, but the mere literal truth, to say that every person having to do with a machine is, for the time, and so far as the action occupies him, obliged to practise the strict rules of the highest morality. He must only expect according to his knowledge of the adaptation of means and ends ; he must

bear in mind that wrong action is as much matter of cause and effect as right behaviour is; and he must encourage no superstitious hopes of results preceding processes. The wise man of the ancient philosophers could not do more than this; his much-boasted self-restraint, charity, and culture only tended to produce an engineer's frame of mind! A vital difference, it is true, existed in his favour (supposing, that is, that he ever existed)—he practised those rules intelligently towards his fellow-men, and not mechanically to machines. But if we take into account the ceaseless multiplication of machinery, and the long periods of time spent by increasing numbers of the population in dealing with it, it cannot but be anticipated that some kind of new disciplinary and educative process is going forward; and, to my thinking, an inquiry into the influence of this having to do with machinery on human character is not unimportant, but is curiously interesting when followed out to some of the subtle conclusions to which it points.

Those who have not specially considered the point, have no adequate idea of the extent to which the passions are exercised in common life. Observation has convinced us, that, in manual labour apart from the aid of machinery, the leading emotions operate very freely, and almost continuously. They are, indeed, the great sources of the motive power by which it is carried on. Watch a man digging, and you will see that if a stone resists, his anger rises instantly; the gardener cannot crop you a hedge without every two or three minutes falling into little fits at the freaks of the twigs; or stand by when Hodge is threshing, and you cannot avoid noticing how the stroke of the flail grows savage whenever the straw interlaces. Tailors become desperate if their thread knots itself, and shoemakers turn vicious because the awl will not slip through the leather. The servant-girl in the dairy sulks at the slow-churning butter, and afterwards quarrels with the fire in the kitchen. It is a great mistake to think that we only have differences with fellow human beings; we are almost perpetually rehearsing our fraternal quarrels with inanimate things. The same facts are even still more strikingly brought out in the case of those who have to deal with brute animals. Grooms, waggoners, ploughmen, carters, in controlling their dumb assistants, use their passions nearly continuously, and ordinarily in the course of a day expend quite a frightful total of emotion. Of course, no one is objecting against this. Taking men as they now exist, the work would not be done without it. The digging, the felling, and the threshing, would suffer greatly, if the angry strokes were withdrawn, and the driver would often stand fast in perplexed inaction beside the dull horse if he were forbidden to show temper. As has been already stated, the passions supply the reserve power in all the little ever-recurring crises of manual labour; but this continual exercise of the emotions must, we submit, necessarily have an effect on the characters of those subjected to it. Just as, on the other hand, I say the introduction of machinery into so many branches of labour is reducing this lively emotional experience to a set level of

mechanical calculation ; and, in course of time, it must have a modifying effect upon human character.

But machinery has a further influence, too relevant not to be mentioned, though it may not be absolutely necessary to the main arguments. If the substitution of calculated mechanical forces for the fitful impulses of the unaided muscles quiets the emotions, the way in which machinery fixes the processes and favours the division of labour destroys its intellectual character. Labour, when it meant the completion of an article of production by one pair of hands, involved little difficulties which required the exercise of ingenuity ; but labour, in the case of the bulk, is now becoming unskilled in the sense of contrivance and original resource being called for. All that has to be done will soon be, simply to give a lever a jerk here, and to throw up a strap there, without any choice of how it shall be done ; and, indeed, the introduction of anything like originality into your movements is already rewarded by a ruinous crash ; the machine resents such partnership, and comes to a standstill. Thought is growing to be less and less required in manufacturing processes ; one man thinks what is necessary once for all, and embodies the thought in iron. Labour is, consequently, becoming more and more mechanical, even where it is yet partly manual, and the intellect, as well as the passions, is kept in abeyance in modern toil. And it is not only that the action of the reasoning faculties is not needed, but the infinitesimal division of the process makes the use of the imagination almost impossible. Supposing a Birmingham workman completed a whole pin, he might please his fancy as he laboured by wondering what shawl it would hold fast, what dainty fingers might play around it ; but now that he only makes the head, and somebody he does not even know is shaping the point in another shop, while a third party elsewhere, unacquainted with either of them, will affix the parts, his imagination is hampered. He may, it is true, spend his minute intervals of leisure in wondering what pin-point his pin-head will come to match with, but that is not so lively a conception as the other. Even the machinists themselves have to work blindly ; for cranks are made at one factory, and pistons at another place, and boilers in a different part of the country. Artisan labour, speaking generally, absorbs a continually decreasing quantity of the workman's thought, and, in fact, so far as the brain and the emotions are concerned, is becoming a state of rest instead of exhaustion. The grave question is, what will the final effect of this be ? does it point to the passions and the intellect sinking into comparative quietude, or does it indicate that in the future men's thoughts, released from following the minute operations of their own hands, will, free from this drudgery, be left fresh for more general views of principles, and that the emotions, no longer exhausted in man's solitary toil, must find their gratification in social life during his greater leisure ? These suggestions seem to afford limits of a loftier civilization ; but we have not yet exhausted the consideration of the case itself. Machinery is not

confined to constructions of iron; there are social organizations which may fairly be classed under the head of machinery. The comparatively perfect modern police system, and the more detailed administration of the laws, providing quick redress for all grievances, and leaving nothing in the way of personal defence to the private citizen; the establishment of Joint Stock Companies, and the enlarging of the scale of business until transactions become impersonal; the regularity introduced into our movements by the creation of the railways; all these, together with other arrangements, combine to abate the action of the passions. How this is done may be explained in very few words.

The passions only operate within a narrow range, and personal contact, or, at least, a process of individualizing the objects of them, is requisite to excite them. You could not be angry at carbonic acid gas, no matter what injury it did, nor could you cherish much hatred against a defaulting corporation, if you had no knowledge of its members. Your wrongs must be made definite, and the agents of them be individualized, if the passions are to come into play in any effective manner. But the scale of commercial operations has grown so large, and social dealings in many ways have become so indirect, that this sense of personality, or any possibility of individualizing those with whom you have to deal, is greatly limited. System, which is machinery, is everywhere obtaining. You insure your life with persons you never saw; if you like, you may put your savings into the post-office, and do your thrift wholly inside letters; you may trade for a dozen years with firms all over the country, and not personally know a member of any one of them. All sense of personal dealings is vanishing out of our commercial transactions; they are becoming merely intellectual calculations with which the emotions have little to do. Nor is it only of trading matters that this holds good. If a man has to voyage to the world's end, he does not now go to pick out the ship by the look of it, and try to make the prior acquaintance of the captain to whom his life and fortune are to be entrusted; but he refers to a list of the shipping advertisements, and the utmost he can do, in the shape of exercising individual judgment, is to reflect which steam-packet company has a reputation for fewest accidents. This, no doubt, is safer than if he selected his own vessel by the mere fancy for its hull or the style of its figure-head, and relied upon the captain on account of his bluff voice and cheery look; the only point I wish to bring out is that in the one case his emotions would be exercised, and that in the other they are not. When we used to travel by coach we were in the habit of taking an interest in the driver, but now when we step into a railway train, who thinks what sort of man they have for engineer? Not the oldest of old women ever refuses to enter, and says, "I will not be driven by that man!" The extent to which we can go in the use of our own wits is to think that it is the interest of the company to arrange so as to avoid accidents because of the damages they involve; and so we may have a mental confidence of our safety;

but the feelings are blind, and cannot act a whit. This mechanical character, in great measure, applies to the whole range of modern operations. Take the very extremest case by way of illustration—that of war. War is now carried on without the play of the passions; battles are fought out by the aid of rifled guns at distances where the opposing armies never see each others' eyes; and the combatants only learn from the general orders of the next day which side won. Where are now the rage and the terror of personal conflict? What has become of the noise, of the shouting, and the thunder of the captains? They grow fainter and fainter, and the passions die away out of the mechanic struggle. For the same reasons, the immense constructive feats we now do fail greatly to enlist the feelings, and only, as it were, titillate the intellect. Consider the height of our viaducts, the span of our bridges, the size of our ships,—the world has seen nothing to compare with them; but our emotions are not exercised by them in proportion. How can they be? The works are done by "Co.s," and even in the achieving of the feats, several monster abstractions are now partners; so that it becomes uncertain for how much of what is effected man should be praised, and how much of the credit is due to steam, electricity, and chemistry. Everything is settling down into matter of intellectual inquiry merely; we puzzle our wits about modern achievements, not bow our hearts before them.

The general conclusion I arrive at is, that, owing to mechanical causes operating with cumulating force in modern society, the passions are destined to weaken and fade, and life to become more and more an intellectual process. In their nature, some of the stronger emotions indicate that they are but temporary qualities of human character, only useful as makeshifts, pending the fuller development of reason, and wise men have always aimed at their suppression. Who associates them with his ideas of a state hereafter? No doubt, even rage and hate have their uses so long as men are without adequate knowledge of the mutuality of their interests, and have to depend upon physical force for their defence; but though they are defensive instincts, they are eradicable, as most systems of ethics have assumed more or less distinctly, and the Christian scheme completely. The important fact I have been trying to bring out is, that this is no longer solely dependent on moral persuasion. I submit that the introduction of machinery, the diminution of the sense of personal dealing out of commercial transactions, and the perfecting of our administrative system, establishing everywhere the triumph of the laws, are what may be termed mechanical influences operating with gradually increasing effect in enforcing a comparative inaction of the passions, and that in the repose of the feelings this secured religion may be expected to have freer scope than it has ever had previously—the two causes conjoined pointing to a degree of civilization far beyond the range of our present conceptions. Men will necessarily grow milder, and life will be embellished by the quieter feelings, purified and enlarged, while the rougher, turbulent emotions will die away.

The Economics of Country Life.

I.—INITIAL.

Of all the changes which this century has seen perhaps the most remarkable has been the breaking down of the boundary lines which divided the town from the country. Not a hundred years ago Lancashire was almost as much a *terra incognita* to the Londoner as the Fiji—I beg pardon, the Viti Islands—are to Englishmen of the present day. And to the countryman London was a wonder and a mystery. Hodge, the farm labourer, inhabiting “the Sheeres,” had heard speak of it as of a city full of pitfalls to the unwary, a city whose streets were paved with gold. But he no more thought of beholding it with the eyes of the flesh than he did of travelling at the rate of forty miles an hour. And Hedge’s master, the squire, when he came up to town on rare occasions, was as much an alien as if he had been born in Algeria. He was a stranger among his own countrymen ; a man of a different garb, and different habits. And to the thorough-bred Cockney the country was equally strange. To him every farm labourer was a swain, every milkmaid a nymph. He finds himself amongst the Derbyshire hills, and is astonished at their stupendous height, and terrified by their steepness. But a century has seen all this entirely changed. Old women from Cornwall come up to the Exhibition, jostle you in omnibuses, and know to a penny the fare from Charing Cross to the Bunk. And City men are pretty well up in wheat and mangolds, think scorn of Mr. Mecii’s balance-sheet, and possibly do a little bit of farming themselves before breakfast, ere they start on a forty-miles’ ride to their place of business.

In fact country life with City people has become a passion, and consequently country pleasures, shooting, fishing, gardening, farming, have become a trade. A good trout stream, anywhere near a large town, is quite a little fortune to its owner, if he chooses to let the fishing. And not the least amusing reading of the *Field* newspaper is to be found in its advertising columns ; for there lies spread open before the reader a chart of the occupations and pleasures of country life, the wants of would-be country people, and the supply which is always ready to meet that demand—for capital, like Nature, abhors a vacuum. So that when we see on one page, “Wanted a small country-house suitable for a genteel family, with a few acres of land about it, and, if possible, shooting and fishing in the neighbourhood,” we are pretty certain that the next page will offer us “A small but commodious country-house, suitable for a genteel family, with,” &c. The genteel family, therefore, have evidently nothing to do but to apply to A.B.C., to find every requirement fulfilled.

We will presume that they do so. Puterfamilias—of course, taking Materfamilias with him—goes off at once to inspect the house, which is small, but commodious enough; the land, some fifty acres, we will say, lies close by, in a ring fence; the stabling is good and convenient; the garden a gem; a pretty stream, well stocked with fish, runs through the grounds. And there is shooting to be rented at a reasonable rate in the neighbourhood. Patersfamilias closes with the bargain at once, and as to stocking the farm, and putting a good horse into that comfortable loose box, and getting the garden into the very best order—why there are hundreds of advertisements in every week's newspaper, which offer everything that any genteel family can need. Patersfamilias, of course, takes in the *Field*, and, glancing at the advertising columns, it almost seems to him that mankind in general have set themselves to the business of supplying his special wants. For him Mr. Coper has filled his stables with carriage-horses, hacks, hunters, cobs, ponies, all of unblemished reputation, and all warranted sound. For him Messrs. Butter and Co. have just imported a herd of down-calving Brittany cows, "excellent milkers, and well suited for amateur farmers." For him—but why go through the catalogue?—if Patersfamilias wishes to stock his farm and furnish his house and stables, and to be comfortable in his new abode, he has only got to put his hands into his breeches-pocket and to buy and be happy. How delightful it all looks upon paper, to be sure!

But as Patersfamilias will probably have to buy his experience pretty dear; as possibly the horse which Mr. Coper sells him may turn out lame or broken-winded, or may be a vicious brute with a propensity for kicking the carriage to pieces as soon as he gets between the shafts; as it may happen that his cow proves an inveterate old maid, and refuses to supply the family with milk,—as these or many other untoward events may happen, it may be of interest to him to study the map of the country which he is going to travel with one who knows the road well, and who, as an amateur farmer in a small way, has suffered all these mischances and many more, and yet who is satisfied that farming on a small scale pays well, and is profitable in more directions than one.

We are told that "some men are born to greatness, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." However this may be with greatness, of which I do not pretend to know anything, I am sure it holds good with farming. I was not born to it, but I had it thrust upon me, or rather I gradually became entangled in its fascinating meshes. When I came to settle in B. (we will call my little farm B., if you please), some two or three years back, I knew nothing whatever about the Economics of Country Life. I had never studied them, and I did not care about them. I hated the smell of a turnip-field, and scarcely knew barley from oats. The consequence was that the "swains" and "nymphs" of the neighbourhood pillaged me most unmercifully. I had to pay a penny a piece for eggs all the year round, and fourpence a quart for milk; in fact, London prices in a little country village a hundred miles away from

Charing Cross ; and for less than this no one would sell me either milk or eggs. I might take them or leave them ; but I was told that the hens of B. refused to lay eggs under a penny a piece, nor would the cows give down their milk under fourpence a quart. So I speedily held a cabinet council with mamma, and said, " This will never do, we must keep cows." To which mamma assentingly responded, adding, " And I hope, my dear, you will stock the hen-roost, for really the children," &c. &c.

But perhaps before going any further it will be well to give the reader a sketch of our surroundings, of the land, arable and pasture, of the garden, &c., on which the following experiments were tried. Of household economy I do not mean to speak ; and, therefore, it will be scarcely necessary to describe my house and household arrangements further than to say that the house is a small but comfortable one, thatched and picturesque enough, suitable in all ways for a man of moderate income, with a family of young children growing up about him. The country immediately around the village of B. is somewhat bare and desolate-looking, standing high, with few trees, the land being almost all in arable, the fields very large, and well tilled. Altogether, I suppose the farming of East Anglia, in which B. is situated, will bear comparison with the farming of any county in England. In fact, we rather look down upon the " Sheeres," and consider them decidedly behindhand in the march of agricultural improvement. But bare and high as the land immediately around us is, it slopes downwards towards the village, and forms a little hollow or basin, in which the village nestles, so that we are completely sheltered from all winds, north and east. And in this hollow, thick sown as it is with thatched-roofed cottages, clustering around an old grey, flint-built church, the trees are plentiful ; some fine old elms and beeches amongst them, where the rooks have built for centuries back. So that it is a pretty sight, on a fine summer evening, to stand upon the high ground above the village, and look down over the russet roofs, thick patched with moss, and to see the blue smoke curling up from the brick chimneys—a sign that mother is getting ready father's meal when he shall have come home from work ; whilst the voices of merry children let loose from school float up to us, softened by distance ; and the rooks are flapping and cawing round the elm-tree tops before settling for the night.

Our house stands in the midst of a little over fourteen acres of land, arable, pasture, and garden ; and house and land are my own ; so that what improvements were necessary to be made in the way of cutting down trees, levelling fences, and the like, could be done as soon as I saw they were needed. The " lay of the land," as they say here, is towards the south, on a gentle slope, but in the valley ; so that we are sheltered from the cold winds of the Eastern Counties. The shape of the land is somewhat of a parallelogram. In the midst stands the house, or cottage rather ; in front of it are about seven acres of pasture in one field, and at the back about six acres more of arable land, good soil rather inclining to clay. Not a stiff clay, it must be remembered, such as has been well

described as "grinning all the summer, and weeping all the winter," but a good loamy wheat soil, which will also grow barley. To the right of the house there is about an acre of garden ground; to the left a few thatched outbuildings; stable and coach-house, barn, cow-house, pigstie, &c.; so that on the whole we are very compactly placed; the house well shut in from the road, and the farm, so to speak, under one's own eye: a great advantage this to the amateur farmer, who, perhaps, does not care to get up every morning at daybreak. A belt of plantation runs round three sides of the seven-acre meadow, and there are also a few good-sized elms and ashes scattered here and there, which make a pleasant park-like prospect from the windows. There are no trees on the arable six acres, which also lie in one piece. But a small belt of plantation must be made at some future time at the north side of it, as a shelter.

As soon, then, as we were fairly settled in our new home, I came to the resolution, after a consultation with mamma, that it would never do to go on paying fourpence a quart for new, and twopence a quart for skim milk. Cows, therefore, must be kept. Given, then, seven acres of meadow, the problem to be solved was to maintain two cows, a winter and a summer cow, thereon, and also to get hay enough from it for a horse or pony. The pasture land, therefore, I at once took into my own occupation. The arable land was let to a tenant at 2*l.* per acre, free of rates and taxes.

But it soon became evident that it was bad economy to keep cows upon pasture land only. In the first place the winter cow, calving about November, required mangolds as well as hay; and these had to be bought. And the swains, not being able to sell their milk at fourpence a quart, had, of course, a "pull" upon one in the matter of mangolds. The farmer's price for mangolds was, I fancy, about 10*s.* or 12*s.* a ton. To me—"let you have 'em as a favour, sir!" they were a sovereign. Then straw had to be bought for littering the cows in the yard through the winter months, and for the stable. So I soon saw that if I was to keep cows and make them pay for their keep, it would be good economy to take into my own hands the arable as well as the pasture land. Should I not grow my own oats and beans, potatoes for household use and the pigs, mangolds for the cows, straw for litter for all the animals? "Go to!" I said one fine autumn morning to my factotum Thomas, "we will take the arable and begin to farm in earnest." Whereupon, scratching his head, a sign of deep and earnest meditation on the part of Thomas—and then balancing about a tablespoonful of "moulds," as he calls the earth, on his spade, he replied with much deliberation, "Well, I suppose we can work that, sir." For Thomas seldom commits himself to a positive statement of any kind.

But this account of my farm and stock would be quite incomplete, without at any rate an outline portrait of my faithful servant and friend.

Some eight years ago, I took Thomas from the plough to be general out-door man-servant, groom, coachman, and gardener. It was also intended that he should occasionally wait at table. But his early training was against this. *Naturam expellas furca*, you know, and habits acquired

in early life rendered his presence unadvisable in the dining-room, and incapacitated him from playing the part of occasional footman. I shall never forget his first efforts in that direction, and his evident astonishment that master and missis, and the ladies and gentlemen, should make such a fuss over their good victuals by having them in "courses," instead of setting them all down upon the table at once, and eating them up as appetite directed. It was evidently a matter of deep and long pondering with him, and I do not know whether he has solved the problem to this day. But as groom, coachman, and gardener, he does fairly well ; though in his capacity of coachman, I have the greatest difficulty in getting him to touch his hat to my friends when he passes them on the road. With those who are simply acquaintances, I believe he does go through the form. But when I see my friend Macaulay in the distance, I am pretty certain that Thomas will turn round from his perch and say, "Here's Master Macooly acoming, sir;" and that he will greet my friend with a broad grin of welcome, instead of with the customary touch of the hat. The fact is, that Thomas thoroughly identifies himself with us and with our fortunes. When I took him into my service some eight years back, he was utterly bankrupt in body and in purse. He had been a farm-labourer out of work for some months, down with a low fever ; had run up a long bill at the shop and with the miller ; and his wife and children were nearly starving. When I told him that I would take him into my employment, he fairly broke down, and sobbed like a child. But from that day to this he has proved himself a most faithful and attached servant—a living specimen of the "antique service of the ancient world,"—one of those headless, honest, hard-working civil creatures, who will spend their lives in your service, if you will let them,—soon to be extinct, I suppose, as the dodo.

II.—THE STABLE AND THE HORSE OF ALL WORK.

ONE of the first things that Paterfamilias does after settling down in his new house, is of course to procure a tenant for that comfortable loose box which he finds in the new stable. And this is of all his work the hardest, and the one which, ultimately, perhaps, the least satisfies him. And yet it is not for want of material with which to experiment. He may have some difficulty in meeting with a man to look after his horse and garden, at least with a man who has a year or two's good character to show. But he will not have the slightest difficulty in finding any number of horses for sale, and all, too, with characters which are irreproachable and above suspicion. If he trusts to advertisements, there are whole columns in the *Field* devoted to this very subject. There is every day one entire column published in *The Times* newspaper,—(ah, my friend and brother horse-buyer from the country, what tempting, what inviting offers are here!)—telling him where he may meet with chargers, hunters (with est-

blished characters of some seasons), hacks (which have always been ridden by a lady), and old gentlemen's cobs, dray-horses in miniature, high steppers, and of course sound, quiet, fast, and good, at ridiculously low prices. The fancy of the owner of these charming quadrupeds seems actually to luxuriate and run riot when he has to describe their perfection, and he does contrive to impart some of his enthusiasm to the too willing reader. There is a romance as of Eastern coursers, of Arabs of the desert, thrown over the whole business. A glamour is upon the purchaser whilst the seller holds him spell-bound, like the Ancient Mariner of yore, with his glittering eye. Ah! my anxious and eager horse-buying friend from the country, beware of those too-inviting offers in *The Times* newspaper!

Our Paterfamilias need not trust to advertisements if he wants to experiment in horseflesh. He has only to let it generally be known in his neighbourhood that he wants to buy a horse, and he will be inundated with offers. All the little dealers and horse-copers within a radius of twenty miles will pour upon his premises like a swarm of locusts. His stable-yard will be filled with broken-down spavined cobs and ponies which have been undergoing a preparatory course of blistering, grooming, fattening with mashes and oil-cake in the dealer's back stable, with an eye to their being eventually brought out sleek and prancing and clean about the legs before Paterfamilias's admiring gaze. He will have, perhaps—it has occurred to the writer—two or three copers all exhibiting their screws at once, and all chanting the same song to different tunes. For it is a song, evidently got off beforehand by rote, it flows so glibly, with such a parrot-like utterance from the tongue. " You just try him, sir ; that's all I ask you to do ; I don't want you to buy him. He is five years old, so quiet that a child might drive him ; and for riding, why he is made for a hack. Quiet to ride an' drive, fast and sound. Just put your leg over him, and if you don't like him, why I will give him to you. Look at him, sir ! did you ever see an 'ansomer animal than that ? Rising five year old, warranted fast, free from vice, quiet to ride an' drive, and sound." I warn the would-be purchaser, who is inexperienced in horseflesh, that if he once lets these gentry know that he is looking out for a horse, if he is a sanguine person of easy disposition, he is a lost man, at least in respect of his stable economica. Though he may hold out against the siege for a long time, he will have to give in at last, and he will find himself saddled with a bruto whom he cannot get rid of by sale, and whom nobody will take off his hands as a gift.

There is a third easy way in which Paterfamilias may become the possessor of a steed. In some of the larger towns there are periodical sales of horses, when he may have his pick out of fifty or perhaps a hundred nags. But the chances are perhaps many against his getting a really serviceable horse out of the lot. He must remember that at these auctions good horses are sold at a disadvantage, and, therefore, very few really good horses—such as would pass a veterinary surgeon's examination, and are free from vice—are sent to them. If,

indeed, he chooses to run the risk, and is a good judge, he may possibly (with a very strong emphasis upon possibly) pick up the sort of horse he wants. But the chances are that however well the horse may look, there is some defect in him, which, sooner or later, the purchaser will find out to his cost. If a man has a decent horse to sell, he can generally, by biding his time a little, get a far better price for him by private sale than if he sent him to the hammer. If he has an unsound or a vicious horse, why he has only to make him up, give him rest, fatten him, and when he is in thorough good condition, and the lameness has gone off for a time, send him to the auction-mart. As a general rule, horses bought at such places cannot be returned after the third day ; and it takes many a third day to find out the weak places in a horse. Therefore, *caveat emptor*. With some men indeed horse-dealing is a passion ; and they have no objection to buy and buy again till they find what suits them. If the horse they buy to-day turns out blemished, or unsound, or vicious, they can send him to the sale next month, and get perhaps, on the average, what they gave for him. But to Paterfamilias, who does not want his carriage kicked to pieces the first time he drives his new purchase, or to be run away with, or kicked off the first time he mounts him, I say, do not buy at auctions.

But suppose I relate my own experience under one or two of these heads ; for in each of these three ways I have bought horses, and in each of them have been bitten. And first for a glaring example. I happened, some years ago, to be in Town, and being in want of a horse at the time—it was in my salad days, reader—I looked through the advertisements in *The Times*, and noticed one which at any rate promised well. “To be sold, a bay horse, 15½ hands, fast and quiet, has been hunted : warranted sound. Price 25*l.* Apply at”—I forget exactly where it was now—somewhere within a short distance from Covent Garden. I thought there would be no harm in at any rate looking at this very cheap and promising animal. So to — Mews I went that very day. A rather suspicious-looking young gentleman, who called himself a farmer’s son, proclaimed that he was the owner of the horse, and led me into a rather dark stable, where the animal was munching his oats. A very fine-looking horse it was, with a splendid shoulder, and a handsome head. Indeed, as regards the make of a horse, I think I have never seen a handsomer. Could I see him out ? Oh, certainly. Jim, strip the Duke, and lead him out. So the Duke was stripped accordingly, and turned round and brought forward in the stable. There was no yard adjoining, and the owner did not seem to care about having him taken out into the thoroughfare close by, which was indeed scarcely a fit place for trying the qualities of a strange horse. When the clothing was taken off, I was even more struck with his shape and looks. His skin shone like satin. There could be no doubt about the shoulder, and the head was unexceptionable. The hocks were good and sound. I enquired about the price. The young agriculturist—who smacked indeed more of the turf than of the arable—took the bit of straw out of his mouth, which he had been munching, and replied briefly and

carelessly, "The price was in the advertisement, sir; but perhaps you did not notice it. 25*l.*" And then coming closer, he continued, confidentially, "The fact is, there is a screw loose at home, and the governor wants some ready money at once; so the horse is to be sold; and the horse must be sold this day. In fact, I have had one or two applications about him already; and one gentleman who looked at him this morning promised to come back at—why, here is the gentleman, sure enough." To him, as they say in the play-books, enters another gentleman, who was certainly as far removed in appearance from the probable purchaser of a horse as any man I ever saw in my life. He bore a baggy cotton umbrella, such as is represented in the hands of the Shepherd in *Picnic*, and his make-up was altogether of the strangest. The garments as of a broken-down tradesman to the waist, ending in a farmer's gaiters. He reminded one irresistibly of Horace's mermaid—"desinit in pacem, mulier formosa superne." "Why, here is the gentleman," repeated the young agriculturist. "I am afraid you are too late, sir. I promised this gentleman the refusal of the horse." Certainly the horse never looked better than at that moment. He was, at any rate, a superb looking animal. "No," said our new friend, "I won't hold you to your promise. Go on, sir," he said to me, "and if you can't deal, why I'll look over him again, and see if he won't suit me." The end of the matter, for that day at least, was that I bought the horse, paying down 15*l.*, and receiving in return a full and sufficient warranty as to soundness, age, &c. The 10*l.* was to be paid in a fortnight's time, if the horse suited me; if not, he was to be returned, and the money I had paid refunded. Nothing could seem fairer or more straightforward. The seller promised to deliver the horse at the railway-station at a certain hour.

Well, when the new purchase reached my house next day, he was, of course, discovered to be lame—decidedly, irremediably lame. The veterinary surgeon of my neighbourhood, looking him over, remarked, "A finely-made horse, sir, as ever I have seen; but he is lame, always has been lame, and will be as long as he lives." And then he entered into certain anatomical particulars, with which I need not trouble the reader.

What was to be done? How was I to recover my 15*l.*? My only course, I found, was to return him to the seller's stables, with the veterinary surgeon's certificate of unsoundness. This was all very well. But, of course, I also found when I got the horse to the stable where I had bought him that the young agriculturist was not there to receive him. He had only hired the stable for a day or two till he could get a customer. I thought it probable that he might be lurking in the neighbourhood; and a friend of mine, with a strong taste for playing the amateur detective, said he would try and unearth him. And that friend's adventures in the search, as related by himself, were most amusing. I can only give the briefest sketch of them. He soon recognized his man, by my description, lurking at the door of some small public-house close by the stables. They entered into conversation, but the agriculturist was rather shy at first. I

believe they had a dram together at the bar—gin and bitters, or some other abominable compound. In the midst of much sporting talk, my friend suddenly looked up and said, "Come, it's no use beating about the bush any longer. I see you are my man; John Smith, you are wanted." John Smith turned white very suddenly, and looked round to see if he could make a run for it. "You are wanted about that horse, you know, which you sold a gentleman two or three days back." "Oh," replied Mr. Smith, with a whistle of relief, "that's the ticket, is it? How could you go frightening a chap like that? I thought it was about—about another business. I'm all right about the horse; you can't touch me there, sir." Would he take the horse back, and refund the 15*l.*? Not by any means. If the gentleman was tired of his bargain, and wanted the horse taken off his hands, why he would oblige him for another 5*l.* note over and above the 15*l.* Evidently, nothing could be done with Mr. John Smith. So the horse was sent to Aldridge's next sale, where he fetched, I think, about 5*l.*, which did not quite pay his expenses for the few days I had had him. And the best of the joke was that the young agriculturist bought him, and is, for all I know, selling and buying him over and over again up to the present day. I fully expected that he would have tried to get the other 10*l.* of the purchase-money out of me; but even his impudence was not equal to this daring flight.

I pass over the many misadventures which befell me as "a gentleman in search of a horse" during the first year or two after I settled at B——, and before I had learnt from many a teacher, to know what were the points to be looked for in choosing a horse of all work, or, as the dealers term him, a ride-and-drive horse. I fear to say how much I lost in buying and selling again horses and ponies, some of which could not work, whilst others would not. For two years I had a beautifully-made pony of about thirteen hands high—a pretty horse in miniature—who could do almost anything, and would have perfectly suited, but for an unconquerable trick he had of ~~turning~~ running away as soon as his head was turned homeward. How he ~~had~~ learnt this trick I never could find out; it was a sort of madness in ~~him~~ fancy; a slight aberration of the equine mind, which is to be found in horses, I believe, occasionally, as it is in men. I could manage to ~~turn~~ him by using a strong straight bit, recommended by a cunning grancer. But even this one day proved ineffectual; he left me in the road with the basket-carriage overturned at a sharp corner, and appeared at my gate, to the horror of my wife and children, with a small piece of a shaft hanging to him. After that I got rid of the pony with much expedition. On another occasion I was run away with in trying a horse out of a dealer's stable. The horse was harnessed to my carriage and ready to start, when his owner came out in a great hurry and said, that as it was his dinner-time, perhaps I shouldn't mind driving about a bit by myself, and "then a gentleman can see for himself whether an animal is likely to suit him or not." Whether the man feared mischief or not I cannot tell, but I had not gone a hundred yards

before the horse, a handsome thoroughbred, broke into a canter which became a gallop, and fairly ran away with me and the carriage. It was in a town, but fortunately not market-day, and I could manage to steer him through the middle of the street, which was fortunate also, for there was a glazier at work on the top of a long ladder, which we just missed in passing, and his fate must have been pretty certain if the wheel had even grazed it. I shall never forget that man's terror-stricken face looking down upon us, as instantaneous death seemed rushing upon him. Seen only for a second, the white quivering face will be photographed upon my memory for ever.

And so for some years I bought and sold again, always hoping that I had got just the sort of horse I wanted, and always in the end disappointed ; for, in truth, the horse I wanted is a very difficult one to be met with. You can get a hunter, or a hack, or a carriage-horse pretty easily, if you look about you. But a family horse, who shall be a good road-hack, and also be strong enough to draw your phaeton, and have speed, and courage, and wind to follow the hounds occasionally, is a *rara avis*, or rather *equus, in terris*. "I know what it is you want, sir, exactly," said a horse-dealer to me one day, after he had trotted out his stud for my inspection and approval—I need not say in vain—"you want perfection, sir ; that's where it is." And I sighed as I confessed to myself that perhaps the man was right. I *did* want perfection, or as near an approach to it as could be got for the money. And after some years of horse-dealing and not a little expenditure of money, I obtained the very horse I required—perfection in every point except beauty ; but that I did not much care about, holding with the old proverb, that handsome is as handsome does. Looking about me at a fair for a cart-horse to draw coals and work on my farm, I met with a fine young bay mare, which I bought for 26*l.* I had her examined, of course, by a veterinary surgeon, and she was pronounced to be sound. Shortly afterwards my riding-horse fell lame, and I had occasion to mount the cart mare, and never was I better carried in my life. She had indeed in perfection the essential points for a riding-horse, good slanting shoulders and high withers ; and when her legs were trimmed, and she had had a few days' grooming, she looked altogether another creature. I have used her from that day to this, and never wish to have a better. She never stumbles and never tires, is the most gentle and docile creature in the world, and yet full of spirit ; can carry me forward with the hounds, or draw my family carriage to the market town, twelve miles off, in an hour-and-a-half. To account for her possessing so many various good qualities, I found out after I bought her that she was a half-bred horse ; her dam a cart mare, her sire a thorough-bred ; and she combines all the best qualities of both. Of course she is no beauty ; by no means the sort of animal that ladies, or men who know nothing of horses, would admire. Her head is large, her legs somewhat coarse. But no matter for that. I remember Alcibiades' dog, and am satisfied with my purchase.

But perhaps the reader would wish to know the cost of keeping a large horse like this. And as these hints are meant to be practical, I will

set down as nearly as I can the cost of her food during the past year. I allowed her, then, the produce of two acres of oats, which was just twenty coombs (a coomb is four bushels), and two tons of hay. The straw which was cut up with hay for chaff, and used for litter, I do not count, as I consider it was more than paid back by the manure. But the oats I charged myself with at 12*s.* a coomb, and the hay at 3*l.* a ton. Her food altogether, therefore, cost me 18*l.*; but we will say, in round numbers, 20*l.*, as she may have had a few beans now and then, and an occasional bran-mash. Of course these are the grower's prices for the hay and oats, as they could scarcely be bought so low; but this I believe is about the price which the farmer charges himself for the oats and hay he grows and consumes on his farm. The twenty coombs of oats gave the mare when in work about four feeds a day, which is enough for any full-sized horse; and the hay I always gave cut up with oat straw, in the proportion of half and half. A basket of this chaff was mixed with a quarter of a peck of oats, and given her at four times in the day—about every four hours, we will say. Water she had given her twice a day in winter, three times a day in summer. During the summer she had a six weeks' run at grass, when I and my household were at the seaside. Her shoes were taken off, and she had then, of course, but little corn—perhaps one feed a day.

With respect to the price of a horse then, I should say that a man who lives in the country, and goes to a respectable horse-dealer in his neighbourhood (and this, after all, is the most satisfactory way of purchase), ought to get the sort of animal he wants—a good, useful family, or ride-and-drive horse, for from 30*l.* to 40*l.* Ponies, of course, can be bought at all prices. The one which I mentioned in a former page, with a propensity for running away, cost me 30*l.*, but then he was a perfect picture of a horse in miniature; and I have just bought one out of a drove of Welsh ponies, which they bring yearly to a fair in this neighbourhood, for 6*l.*, and he promises to be a very handsome, docile little fellow. But then he is only three years old, and will cost me his keep for another year, while he is doing nothing, and the trouble and expense of breaking. But if he turns out as well as he promises, he will be worth at least 15*l.* or 20*l.* in a year's time, and his keep will not have cost anything like that sum, as I have plenty of grass and straw-chaff to spare; and this will keep him till he is fit to earn his living.

III.—THE FARM.

My farm, as I have before said, consists of about thirteen acres, of which six are arable. The seven acres of grass land lie together. I at once had this grass land divided into two fields with posts and rails. It had been better to divide it into three or even four portions, as the more change of pasture cows have the better they thrive. The same piece of land will keep, I should say, a third more head of stock when it is

divided, than when it is all in one piece. This I soon found out. One half of the grass land—there were about three acres in one field and four in the other—was mown in alternate years; the other half was grazed; and the portion that was grazed I divided in a temporary way each year with hurdles, so that the cows could be changed from one piece to the other every two or three weeks. The pastures of the Eastern Counties I should say are about the poorest in the kingdom, for want of the mists and rainfall which the Gulf-stream brings with it to the Western shores of England; whereas two or three tons of hay per acre are average crops in the West, we East Anglians are thankful to get one ton, or, at most, a ton and a half from an acre of land. Indeed I am not sure but that it would answer better to break up all the grass land in East Anglia and grow artificial grasses instead—clovers, trefoil, and cinquefoil, which flourish admirably here. But one cannot have ploughing going on before one's drawing-room window, and a bare fallow in winter, as would often be the case; so the grass must perforce remain to be made the best of.

And now a word or two about the stock which grazed it. The amateur farmer must make up his mind to pay for experience in buying his cows as in buying his horses. The most experienced lose money by their stock sometimes, and have to put up with it. Indeed it is, I believe, a very generally received maxim amongst farmers that they make nothing whatever by their stock, except the manure which that stock produces. Stock has to be kept in order to grow corn, and they are satisfied if it does not bring them a loss at the year's end. And, doubtless, the small amateur farmer will run his risks. The first cow which I bought was a very handsome little polled (or hornless) cow—the breed of the Eastern Counties; and it is always better, I may remark, to keep the breed of the county you live in—that is, if you wish your farming to pay its expenses. Otherwise, of course, you may branch out into any pleasant little extravagances you choose: Alderneys, Brittany cows, or even the rough shaggy little Scotch beasts, for some of which a friend of mine once sent all the way to the Highlands—as his wife thought they would look such dear, picturesque darlings in the park—with what benefit to his dairy I leave the reader to guess. Well, this little Suffolk, for which I gave 10*l.*, was bought just before she calved, and promised well. But as soon as she had calved it was discovered that she had only three quarters instead of four in her bag. One of them was dry, and gave no milk. This is an accident which often happens to a cow from sleeping in a wet place, and other causes, and as it cannot easily be found out when the cow is not giving milk, I should recommend the amateur farmer to buy his cows soon after calving. But he is often enough imposed upon when he buys a cow, as he supposes, in full milk. It is a very common thing for dealers when they want to sell a cow which has been giving milk for some months, and is, of course, then of less value, to palm off a calf a few days old as the veritable offspring of the cow they want to sell. My advice to the inexperienced, then, is, bide your time. Don't buy at an auction, or of a dealer you know

nothing about; but probably at some of the small farms in your neighbourhood you will find the sort of cow you want, and be able to learn something of her history. You can at any rate see her milked, and so judge what the quality of her milk is. And small farmers are always glad to realize money; so you will probably, unless you are of a very anxious and eager disposition, get the cow at a price not very much above her real value. The Suffolk cow, for which I gave 10*l.*, I was glad to sell for 9*l.*, when I discovered the imperfection in her bag. For two other Suffolks I afterwards gave 10*l.* and 12*l.* 10*s.* respectively—for an Ayrshire, which did not turn out very well, I gave 14*l.* 15*s.* (this included the calf). The 10*l.* Suffolk (the second one) I sold the following year for 14*l.* The Ayrshire brought about the same price I gave for her; she had to be parted with because no fence would keep her within bounds, as she would jump a gate with all the activity of an old hunter.

In the following balance-sheet I am going to give the second year of my experience in farming on a small scale; or rather the second year of my keeping cows and pigs, and the first of my taking the arable six acres in my own hand. The accounts run from Michaelmas to Michaelmas, as it was then I entered upon the arable portion of my farm.

At Michaelmas then, 186-, I find myself in possession of two cows which have cost 22*l.* 10*s.* One of these is sold in the following spring for 11*l.*; when I purchase an Ayrshire cow and calf for 14*l.* 15*s.*, and a young heifer for 4*l.* 5*s.* As incoming tenant I have to take the straw on the farm, which costs me 5*l.* 8*s.*, and is used to bed down the cows through the winter and in the stable. But to simplify matters we will charge it all to the cows, crediting them with the manure which it produces. I also purchase of the outgoing tenant (at farmers' prices) five tons of mangold-wurzel, two tons of carrots, one of which will be charged to the pigsties.

And now for profit and loss on the cows from Michaelmas to Michaelmas:—

Dr.		Cr.	
Two cows	£22 10 0	Cow sold	£11 0 0
Cow and calf.....	14 15 0	Two calves sold	1 13 6
Heifer	4 5 0	Calf sold.....	1 2 6
Etc.....	0 7 6	Heifer.....	6 0 0
Two tons hay.....	6 0 0	Two cows	25 0 0
Three acres feed	10 10 0	Milk and butter used in house	20 0 0
Straw	5 8 0	Milk and butter sold.....	6 10 0
Mangolds, five tons at 12 <i>s.</i>	3 0 0	Butter-milk	1 10 0
Carrots, one ton at £1	1 0 0	Manure	4 8 0
	<hr/> £67 15 6		<hr/> £77 4 0
	<hr/> 67 15 6		<hr/> 67 15 6
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	<hr/> Interest on capital	£9 8 6	
	<hr/> 2 0 0	<hr/> 2 0 0	<hr/>
	<hr/>		
	<hr/> Net profit on cows	£7 8 6	
	<hr/> 2 0 0	<hr/> 2 0 0	<hr/>

It will be seen I have charged 1*l.* of the straw for the cows' food. It was used chopped up and mixed with pulped mangolds. The 20*l.* charged to the house for milk and butter is rather under than over-stated. I had paid much more in previous years. But I do not think fit to credit myself as producer with milk at fourpence a quart : though that is the price I had to pay when I bought it of the farmers in the neighbourhood. The house was plentifully, though, of course, not wastefully, supplied with milk and butter; and occasionally, when we had friends staying with us, with cream : and all of the best quality. I do not charge the labour of the man who tended the cows, or of the cook who made the butter. These servants cost us neither more nor less after we began to farm than they did before.

To supply milk and butter to a family all the year round, of course two cows are needed, a summer and a winter cow. The summer cow should calve about the middle of April, when the grass begins to spring ; the winter cow some time in November. The latter must be fed as much as possible on good sweet hay, although a few pulped mangolds will not materially injure the butter. Turnips are an abomination, and mangolds are not fit for food before the beginning of February at the earliest. But turnips and mangolds (mixed with straw-chaff, oats, or barley,) can be given to the cow which is becoming dry, and so a larger quantity of hay may be spared through the winter season for the cow, which is then giving milk. I should also caution the inexperienced purchaser not to buy a cow with her first calf, unless he can get her very cheaply, for she will not give half as much milk as in subsequent years. The best plan, if you have a really first-rate cow, is to rear her calf, and thus to supply losses caused by accident and age. And now, to adopt the words of the old grand-sire of history, Herodotus, when he is tired of a subject, or fancies he is becoming tedious—let it suffice to have said thus much about cows.

We have next to speak of the "jintleman who pays the rint" in Ireland, and often, I suspect, in England, too. A sow should give two litters of pigs each year, and there ought to be ten or twelve pigs at each litter. These pigs should be worth from six to eight shillings a piece when they are six weeks old ; so that the profit on the pigs only would be 6*l.* annually, if they are sold as soon as weaned. The wash of the house will keep the sow, except when she is suckling, when she will need a little bran or pollard mixed with the wash. One or two of the pigs can be kept for very little till it is, we will say, eighteen months old, which should be about Christmas time ; and then a coomb of barley-meal, worth perhaps 17*s.* 6*d.* or 18*s.*, together with boiled potatoes (those which are too small for the table), will fatten him up into a bacon pig of twelve or fourteen stone. In the following balance-sheet, it will be seen I obtained two litters of pigs of eight and nine respectively, that year. At the Michaelmas from which it begins, I had a sow, eight pigs about ten weeks old, and a store pig about a year old. The store pig was made into bacon some time in the following spring, when it weighed fourteen

stone, having consumed about a coomb of barley-meal. Two of the eight pigs were made into porkers, with a little barley-meal; one died, and the other five sold for 3*l.* 1*ls.*

Dr.	PROFIT ON PIGS.	Cr.	
Sow	£2 0 0	Sow	£2 0 0
Eight pigs	4 0 0	Five pigs sold	3 11 0
Store pig	1 5 0	Porker	1 0 0
Etc.	0 2 6	Ditto	0 17 6
Carrots.....	1 0 0	Fat hog	4 18 0
Pollard.....	0 15 0	Seven pigs sold.....	2 12 0
Two coombs of beans	2 0 0	Two store pigs	3 0 0
One coomb of peas	0 17 6	Eight pigs	2 0 0
One and a half coomb of barley	1 7 0		
Butter-milk	1 10 0		
	£14 17 0	Cost	£19 18 6
		Profit	14 17 0
			£5 1 6

When I took the six acres of arable land into my own hands, I agreed with the former tenant, who still continued to farm other land belonging to me, that he should perform all the labour of this little farm for me, charging a fair, though not, of course, a fancy price for the same. He was to plough for me, and cart the produce home. His men were to reap my crops, &c. Of course it would never have done for me to keep a labourer, or a pair of horses, for the work of so small a farm.

In giving the following balance-sheet it must be remembered that this was my first year of farming, and that some mistakes were unavoidably made, and that the land was not perhaps cropped to the best advantage. Of the six acres I determined to grow half in corn; and this was right enough, as with a horse and two or three cows and pigs, I have plenty of manure to keep the land in good order under such heavy cropping. But in the light of after-experience I found that I should not have sown carrots or beans, as the soil is not well suited for them. At Michaelmas, then, having as incoming tenant taken the last year's straw, valued at 5*l.* 8*s.*, and manure, for which I had to give 3*l.* 18*s.*, I proceeded to lay out the land in the following way:—One acre to barley, half-acre potatoes, half-acre carrots (a mistake), two acres oats, one acre peas, half-acre beans (a mistake also), half-acre mangolds. I manured the acre for barley, also that for peas, also the half-acre for mangolds. The corn crops I have found since should not be manured, but should succeed some crop, root or other, which has received a heavy manuring the year before.

This, then, is the balance-sheet of a farm of thirteen acres—seven being grass land and six arable—from Michaelmas to Michaelmas.

CROPS.	
One acre barley, eleven coombs at 17 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> a coomb	£9 12 6
Half acre potatoes, thirty sacks at 5 <i>s.</i>	7 10 0
Half acre carrots, three tons at £1	3 0 0
Two acres oats, twenty coombs at 12 <i>s.</i>	12 0 0
One acre peas, seven coombs at 17 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	6 2 6
Half acre beans, three coombs at £1	3 0 0
Half acre mangolds, six tons at 10 <i>s.</i>	3 0 0
Carry forward	£44 5 0

Brought forward	£44	5	0
Four acres of grass mown (one ton an acre at £3)	12	0	0
Three acres of grass fed at 70s. per acre	10	10	0
One acre of barley-straw, one and a half tons at £1.....	1	10	0
Two acres of oat-straw, three tons at £1	3	0	0
One acre of pea-straw, one and a half tons at £1.....	1	10	0
Half acre of bean-straw.....	0	10	0
 Return of crops	 £73	5	0

CURRENT EXPENSES.

Rent.....	£26	0	0
Rates, &c.	4	0	0
Labour bill	28	6	6
Manure	3	18	0
Seeds	5	4	0
Threshing	2	0	0
 Return of crops	 £73	5	0

Expenses.....	69	8	6
 Profit on crops	 3	16	6
Profit on cows.....	7	8	6
Profit on pigs	5	1	6
 Net profit.....	 £16	6	6

In the above balance-sheet I may remark the labour bill is much too high; it should not have been more than 20*l.* Yet it will be seen there is a good profit, though the profit on the arable land, 3*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*, is much reduced by the excessive charge for working it. The general calculation is, I believe, that the labour bill on an arable farm should be about another rent; on pasture-land of course, it will be much less. Now, with this little farm, it will be seen I clear 16*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.*, have my bacon, hay, oats, milk and butter at prime cost, besides numberless little advantages, such as refuse barley (that which is mixed with grit, dust, &c. after winnowing) for the fowls, a food which keeps them well enough, and is not worth anything to the producer. Of course, with the light of experience, I shall expect to do better in the future. At any rate in the accounts here set down I have tried to be fair, putting the profits rather under than over, and charging myself the full value for what I have paid.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FATHER AND SONS.



HINGS were not going on any better at Hamley Hall. Nothing had occurred to change the state of dissatisfied feeling into which the squire and his eldest son had respectively fallen; and the long continuance merely of dissatisfaction is sure of itself to deepen the feeling. Roger did all in his power to bring the father and son together; but sometimes wondered if it would not have been better to leave them alone; for they were falling into the habit of respectively making him their confidant, and so defining emotions and opinions which would have had less distinctness if they had been unexpressed. There was little enough relief in the daily

life at the Hall to help them all to shake off the gloom; and it even told on the health of both the squire and Osborne. The squire became thinner, his skin as well as his clothes began to hang loose about him, and the freshness of his colour turned to red streaks, till his cheeks looked like Eardiston pippins, instead of resembling "a Katherine pear on the side that's next the sun." Roger thought that his father ate indoors and smoked in his study more than was good for him, but it had become difficult to get him far afield; he was too much afraid of coming across some sign of the discontinued drainage works, or being irritated afresh by the sight of his depreciated timber. Osborne was rapt up in the idea of arranging his poems for the press, and so working out his wish for independence. What with daily writing to his wife—taking his letters himself to a distant post-office, and receiving hers there—touching up his sonnets, &c., with fastidious care; and occasionally giving himself the pleasure of a visit to the Gibsons, and enjoying the society of the two



WHAT OSBORNE IS IT YOU?

pleasant girls there, he found little time for being with his father. Indeed Osborne was too self-indulgent or "sensitive," as he termed it, to bear well with the squire's gloomy fits, or too frequent querulousness. The consciousness of his secret, too, made Osborne uncomfortable in his father's presence. It was very well for all parties that Roger was not "sensitive," for, if he had been, there were times when it would have been hard to bear little spurts of domestic tyranny, by which his father strove to assert his power over both his sons. One of these occurred very soon after the night of the Hollingford charity-ball.

Roger had induced his father to come out with him; and the squire had, on his son's suggestion, taken with him his long unused spud. The two had wandered far afield; perhaps the elder man had found the unwonted length of exercise too much for him, for, as he approached the house, on his return, he became what nurses call in children "fractious," and ready to turn on his companion for every remark he made. Roger understood the case by instinct, as it were, and bore it all with his usual sweetness of temper. They entered the house by the front door; it lay straight on their line of march. On the old cracked yellow-marble slab, there lay a card with Lord Hollingford's name on it, which Robinson, evidently on the watch for their return, hastened out of his pantry to deliver to Roger.

"His lordship was very sorry not to see you, Mr. Roger, and his lordship left a note for you. Mr. Osborne took it, I think, when he passed through. I asked his lordship if he would like to see Mr. Osborne, who was indoors, as I thought. But his lordship said he was pressed for time, and told me to make his excuses."

"Didn't he ask for me?" growled the squire.

"No, sir; I can't say as his lordship did. He would never have thought of Mr. Osborne, sir, if I hadn't named him. It was Mr. Roger he seemed so keen after."

"Very odd," said the squire. Roger said nothing, although he naturally felt some curiosity. He went into the drawing-room; not quite aware that his father was following him. Osborne sat at a table near the fire, pen in hand, looking over one of his poems, and dotting the *i's*, crossing the *f's*, and now and then pausing over the alteration of a word.

"Oh, Roger!" he said, as his brother came in, "here's been Lord Hollingford wanting to see you."

"I know," replied Roger.

"And he's left a note for you. Robinson tried to persuade him it was for my father, so he's added a 'junior' (Roger Hamley, Esq., junior) in pencil." The squire was in the room by this time, and what he had overheard rubbed him up still more the wrong way. Roger took his unopened note and read it.

"What does he say?" asked the squire.

Reger handed him the note. It contained an invitation to dinner to

meet M. Geoffroi St. H., whose views on certain subjects Roger had been advocating in the article Lord Hollingsford had spoken about to Molly, when he danced with her at the Hollingsford ball. M. Geoffroi St. H. was in England now, and was expected to pay a visit at the Towers in the course of the following week. He had expressed a wish to meet the author of the paper which had already attracted the attention of the French comparative anatomists ; and Lord Hollingsford added a few words as to his own desire to make the acquaintance of a neighbour whose tastes were so similar to his own ; and then followed a civil message from Lord and Lady Cumnor.

Lord Hollingsford's hand was cramped and rather illegible. The squire could not read it all at once, and was enough put out to decline any assistance in deciphering it. At last he made it out.

" So my lord lieutenant is taking some notice of the Hamleys at last. The election is coming on, is it ? But I can tell him we're not to be got so easily. I suppose this trap is set for you, Osborne ? What's this you've been writing that the French mounseer is so taken with ? "

" It is not me, sir ! " said Osborne. " Both note and call are for Roger."

" I don't understand it," said the squire. " These Whig fellows have never done their duty by me ; not that I want it of them. The Duke of Debenham used to pay the Hamleys a respect due to 'em—the oldest landowners in the county—but since he died, and this shabby Whig lord has succeeded him, I've never dined at the lord lieutenant's—no, not once."

" But I think, sir, I've heard you say Lord Cumnor used to invite you,—only you did not choose to go," said Roger.

" Yes. What d'ye mean by that ? Do you suppose I was going to desert the principles of my family, and curry favour of the Whigs ? No ! leave that to them. They can ask the heir of the Hamleys fast enough when a county election is coming on."

" I tell you, sir," said Osborne, in the irritable tone he sometimes used when his father was particularly unreasonable, " it is not me Lord Hollingsford is inviting ; it is Roger. Roger is making himself known for what he is, a first-rate fellow," continued Osborne—a sting of self-reproach mingling with his generous pride in his brother—" and he is getting himself a name ; he's been writing about these new French theories and discoveries, and this foreign savant very naturally wants to make his acquaintance, and so Lord Hollingsford asks him to dine. It's as clear as can be," lowering his tone, and addressing himself to Roger, " it has nothing to do with politics, if my father would but see it."

Of course the squire heard this little aside with the unlucky uncertainty of hearing which is a characteristic of the beginning of deafness ; and its effect on him was perceptible in the increased acrimony of his next speech.

" You young men think you know everything. I tell you it's a

palpable Whig trick. And what business has Roger—if it is Roger the man wants—to go currying favour with the French? In my day we were content to hate 'em and to lick 'em. But it's just like your conceit, Osborne, setting yourself up to say it's your younger brother they're asking, and not you; I tell you it's you. They think the eldest son was sure to be called after his father, Roger—Roger Hamley, junior. It's as plain as a pike-staff. They know they can't catch me with chaff, but they've got up this French dodge. What business had you to go writing about the French, Roger? I should have thought you were too sensible to take any notice of their fancies and theories; but if it is you they've asked, I'll not have you going and meeting these foreigners at a Whig house. They ought to have asked Osborne. He's the representative of the Hamleys, if I'm not; and they can't get me, let them try ever so. Besides, Osborne has got a bit of the mounseer about him, which he caught with being so fond of going off to the Continent, instead of coming back to his good old English home."

He went on repeating much of what he had said before, till he left the room. Osborne had kept on replying to his unreasonable grumblings, which had only added to his anger; and as soon as the squire had fairly gone, Osborne turned to Roger, and said,—

"Of course you'll go, Roger? ten to one he'll be in another mind to-morrow."

"No," said Roger, bluntly enough—for he was extremely disappointed; "I won't run the chance of vexing him. I shall refuse."

"Don't be such a fool!" exclaimed Osborne. "Really, my father is too unreasonable. You heard how he kept contradicting himself; and such a man as you to be kept under like a child by—"

"Don't let us talk any more about it, Osborne," said Roger, writing away fast. When the note was written, and sent off, he came and put his hand caressingly on Osborne's shoulder, as he sate pretending to read, but in reality vexed with both his father and his brother, though on very different grounds.

"How go the poems, old fellow? I hope they're nearly ready to bring out."

"No, they're not; and if it were not for the money, I shouldn't care if they were never published. What's the use of fame, if one mayn't reap the fruits of it?"

"Come, now, we'll have no more of that; let's talk about the money. I shall be going up for my fellowship examination next week, and then we'll have a purse in common, for they'll never think of not giving me a fellowship now I'm senior wrangler. I'm short enough myself at present, and I don't like to bother my father; but when I'm Fellow, you shall take me down to Winchester, and introduce me to the little wife."

"It will be a month next Monday since I left her," said Osborne, laying down his papers and gazing into the fire, as if by so doing he could

call up her image. "In her letter this morning she bids me give you such a pretty message. It won't bear translating into English ; you must read it for yourself," continued he, pointing out a line or two in a letter he drew out of his pocket.

Roger suspected that one or two of the words were wrongly spelt ; but their purport was so gentle and loving, and had such a touch of simple, respectful gratitude in them, that he could not help being drawn afresh to the little unseen sister-in-law, whose acquaintance Osborne had made by helping her to look for some missing article of the children's, whom she was taking for their daily walk in Hyde Park. For Mrs. Osborne Hamley had been nothing more than a French bonne, very pretty, very graceful, and very much tyrannized over by the rough little boys and girls she had in charge. She was a little orphan-girl, who had charmed the heads of a travelling English family, as she had brought madame some articles of lingerie at an hotel ; and she had been hastily engaged by them as bonne to their children, partly as a pet and plaything herself, partly because it would be so good for the children to learn French from a native (of Alsace !) By and by her mistress ceased to take any particular notice of Aimée in the bustle of London and London gaiety ; but though feeling more and more forlorn in a strange land every day, the French girl strove hard to do her duty. One touch of kindness, however, was enough to set the fountain gushing ; and she and Osborne naturally fell into an ideal state of love, to be rudely disturbed by the indignation of the mother, when accident discovered to her the attachment existing between her children's bonne and a young man of an entirely different class. Aimée answered truly to all her mistress's questions ; but no worldly wisdom, nor any lesson to be learnt from another's experience, could in the least disturb her entire faith in her lover. Perhaps Mrs. Townshend did no more than her duty in immediately sending Aimée back to Metz, where she had first met with her, and where such relations as remained to the girl might be supposed to be residing. But, altogether, she knew so little of the kind of people or life to which she was consigning her deposed protégée that Osborne, after listening with impatient indignation to the lecture which Mrs. Townshend gave him when he insisted on seeing her in order to learn what had become of his love, that the young man set off straight for Metz in hot haste, and did not let the grass grow under his feet until he had made Aimée his wife. All this had occurred the previous autumn, and Roger did not know of the step his brother had taken until it was irrevocable. Then came the mother's death, which, besides the simplicity of its own overwhelming sorrow, brought with it the loss of the kind, tender mediatrix, who could always soften and turn his father's heart. It is doubtful, however, if even she could have succeeded in this, for the squire looked high, and over high, for the wife of his heir ; he detested all foreigners, and over-more held all Roman Catholics in dread and abomination something akin to our ancestors' hatred of witchcraft. All these prejudices were strengthened by his grief. Argument would always

have glanced harmless away off his shield of utter unreason ; but a loving impulse, in a happy moment, might have softened his heart to what he most detested in the former days. But the happy moments came not now, and the loving impulses were trodden down by the bitterness of his frequent remorse, not less than by his growing irritability ; so Aimée lived solitary in the little cottage near Winchester in which Osborne had installed her when she first came to England as his wife, and in the dainty furnishing of which he had run himself so deeply into debt. For Osborne consulted his own fastidious taste in his purchases rather than her simple childlike wishes and wants, and looked upon the little Frenchwoman rather as the future mistress of Hamley Hall than as the wife of a man who was wholly dependent on others at present. He had chosen a southern county as being far removed from those midland shires where the name of Hamley of Hamley was well and widely known ; for he did not wish his wife to assume only for a time a name which was not justly and legally her own. In all these arrangements he had willingly striven to do his full duty by her ; and she repaid him with passionate devotion and admiring reverence. If his vanity had met with a check, or his worthy desires for college honours had been disappointed, he knew where to go for a comforter ; one who poured out praise till her words were choked in her throat by the rapidity of her thoughts, and who poured out the small vials of her indignation on every one who did not acknowledge and bow down to her husband's merits. If she ever wished to go to the château—that was his home—and to be introduced to his family, Aimée never hinted a word of it to him. Only she did yearn, and she did plead, for a little more of her husband's company ; and the good reasons which had convinced her of the necessity of his being so much away when he was present to urge them, failed in their efficacy when she tried to reproduce them to herself in his absence.

The afternoon of the 'day on which Lord Hollingsford had called, Roger was going upstairs, three steps at a time, when, at a turn on the landing, he encountered his father. It was the first time he had seen him since their conversation about the Towers' invitation to dinner. The squire stopped his son by standing right in the middle of the passage.

"Thou'rt going to meet the mounseer, my lad ?" said he, half affirmative, half as question.

"No, sir ; I sent off James almost immediately with a note declining it. I don't care about it—that's to say, not to signify."

"Why did you take me up so sharp, Roger ?" said his father pettishly. "You all take me up so hastily now-a-days. I think it's hard when a man mustn't be allowed a bit of crossness when he's tired and heavy at heart—that I do."

"But, father, I should never like to go to a house where they had slighted you."

"Nay, nay, lad," said the squire, brightening up a little ; "I think I slighted them. They asked me to dinner after my lord was made

lieutenant time after time, but I never would go near 'em. I call that my slighting them."

And no more was said at the time; but the next day the squire again stopped Roger.

"I've been making Jem try on his livery-coat that he hasn't worn this three or four years,—he's got too stout for it now."

"Well, he needn't wear it, need he? and Dawson's lad will be glad enough of it,—he's sadly in want of clothes."

"Ay, ay; but who's to go with you when you call at the Towers? It's but polite to call after Lord What's-his-name has taken the trouble to come here; and I shouldn't like you to go without a groom."

"My dear father! I shouldn't know what to do with a man riding at my back. I can find my way to the stable-yard for myself, or there'll be some man about to take my horse. Don't trouble yourself about that."

"Well, you're not Osborne, to be sure. Perhaps it won't strike 'em as strange for you. But you must look up, and hold your own, and remember you're one of the Hamleys, who've been on the same land for hundreds of years, while they're but trumpery Whig folk who only came into the county in Queen Anne's time."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RIVALRY.

For some days after the ball Cynthia seemed languid, and was very silent. Molly, who had promised herself fully as much enjoyment in talking over the past gaiety with Cynthia as in the evening itself, was disappointed when she found that all conversation on the subject was rather evaded than encouraged. Mrs. Gibson, it is true, was ready to go over the ground as many times as any one liked; but her words were always like ready-made clothes, and never fitted individual thoughts. Anybody might have used them, and, with a change of proper names, they might have served to describe any ball. She repeatedly used the same language in speaking about it, till Molly knew the sentences and their sequence even to irritation.

"Ah! Mr. Osborne, you should have been there! I said to myself many a time how you really should have been there—you and your brother of course."

"I thought of you very often during the evening!"

"Did you? Now that I call very kind of you. Cynthia, darling! Do you hear what Mr. Osborne Hamley was saying?" as Cynthia came into the room just then. "He thought of us all on the evening of the ball."

"He did better than merely remember us then," said Cynthia, with her soft slow smile. "We owe him thanks for those beautiful flowers, mamma."

"Oh!" said Osborne, "you must not thank me exclusively. I believe it was my thought, but Roger took all the trouble of it."

"I consider the thought as everything," said Mrs. Gibson. "Thought is spiritual, while action is merely material."

This fine sentence took the speaker herself by surprise; and in such conversation as was then going on, it is not necessary to accurately define the meaning of everything that is said.

"I'm afraid the flowers were too late to be of much use though," continued Osborne. "I met Preston the next morning, and of course we talked about the ball. I was sorry to find he had been beforehand with us."

"He only sent one nosegay, and that was for Cynthia," said Molly, looking up from her work. "And it did not come till after we had received the flowers from Hamley." Molly caught a sight of Cynthia's face before she bent down again to her sewing. It was scarlet in colour, and there was a flash of anger in her eyes. Both she and her mother hastened to speak as soon as Molly had finished, but Cynthia's voice was choked with passion, and Mrs. Gibson had the word.

"Mr. Preston's bouquet was just one of those formal affairs any one can buy at a nursery-garden, which always strike me as having no sentiment in them. I would far rather have two or three lilies of the valley gathered for me by a person I like, than the most expensive bouquet that could be bought!"

"Mr. Preston had no business to speak as if he had forestalled you," said Cynthia. "It came just as we were ready to go, and I put it into the fire directly."

"Cynthia, my dear love!" said Mrs. Gibson (who had never heard of the fate of the flowers until now), "what an idea of yourself you will give to Mr. Osborne Hamley; but to be sure, I can quite understand it. You inherit my feeling—my prejudice—sentimental I grant, against bought flowers."

Cynthia was silent for a moment; then she said, "I used some of your flowers, Mr. Hamley, to dress Molly's hair. It was a great temptation, for the colour so exactly matched her coral ornaments; but I believe she thought it treacherous to disturb the arrangement, so I ought to take all the blame on myself."

"The arrangement was my brother's, as I told you; but I am sure he would have preferred seeing them in Miss Gibson's hair rather than in the blazing fire. Mr. Preston comes far the worst off." Osborne was rather amused at the whole affair, and would have liked to probe Cynthia's motives a little farther. He did not hear Molly saying in as soft a voice as if she were talking to herself, "I wore mine just as they were sent," for Mrs. Gibson came in with a total change of subject.

"Speaking of lilies of the valley, is it true that they grow wild in Hurst Wood? It is not the season for them to be in flower yet; but when it is, I think we must take a walk there—with our luncheon in a

basket—a little picnic in fact. You'll join us, won't you?" turning to Osborne. "I think it's a charming plan! You could ride to Hollingford and put up your horse here, and we could have a long day in the woods and all come home to dinner—dinner with a basket of lilies in the middle of the table!"

"I should like it very much," said Osborne; "but I may not be at home. Roger is more likely to be here, I believe, at that time—a month hence." He was thinking of the visit to London to sell his poems, and the run down to Winchester which he anticipated afterwards—the end of May had been the period fixed for this pleasure for some time, not merely in his own mind, but in writing to his wife.

"Oh, but you must be with us! We must wait for Mr. Osborne Hamley, must not we, Cynthia?"

"I'm afraid the lilies won't wait," replied Cynthia.

"Well, then, we must put it off till dog-rose and honeysuckle time. You will be at home then, won't you? or does the London season present too many attractions?"

"I don't exactly know when dog-roses are in flower!"

"Not know, and you a poet? Don't you remember the lines—

It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed?"

"Yes; but that doesn't specify the time of year that is the time of roses; and I believe my movements are guided more by the lunar calendar than the floral. You had better take my brother for your companion; he is practical in his love of flowers, I am only theoretical."

"Does that fine word 'theoretical' imply that you are ignorant?" asked Cynthia.

"Of course we shall be happy to see your brother; but why can't we have you too? I confess to a little timidity in the presence of one so deep and learned as your brother is from all accounts. Give me a little charming ignorance, if we must call it by that hard word."

Osborne bowed. It was very pleasant to him to be petted and flattered, even though he knew all the time that it was only flattery. It was an agreeable contrast to the home that was so dismal to him, to come to this house, where the society of two agreeable girls, and the soothing syrup of their mother's speeches, awaited him whenever he liked to come. To say nothing of the difference that struck upon his senscs, poetical though he might esteem himself, of a sitting-room full of flowers and tokens of women's presence, where all the chairs were easy, and all the tables well covered with pretty things, to the great drawing-room at home, where the draperies were threadbare, and the seats uncomfortable, and no sign of feminine presence ever now lent a grace to the stiff arrangement of the furniture. Then the meals, light and well cooked, suited his taste and delicate appetite so much better than the rich and heavy viands prepared by the servants at the Hall. Osborne was becoming a little

afraid of falling into the habit of paying too frequent visits to the Gibsons (and that, not because he feared the consequences of his intercourse with the two young ladies ; for he never thought of them excepting as friends ; —the fact of his marriage was constantly present to his mind, and Aimée too securely enthroned in his heart, for him to remember that he might be looked upon by others in the light of a possible husband) ; but the reflection forced itself upon him occasionally, whether he was not trespassing too often on hospitality which he had at present no means of returning.

But Mrs. Gibson, in her ignorance of the true state of affairs, was secretly exultant in the attraction which made him come so often and lounge away the hours in their house and garden. She had no doubt that it was Cynthia who drew him to the house ; and if the latter had been a little more amenable to reason, her mother would have made more frequent allusions than she did to the crisis which she thought was approaching. But she was restrained by the intuitive conviction that if her daughter became conscious of what was impending, and was made aware of Mrs. Gibson's cautious and quiet efforts to forward the catastrophe, the wilful girl would oppose herself to it with all her skill and power. As it was, Mrs. Gibson trusted that Cynthia's affections would become engaged before she knew where she was, and that in that case she would not attempt to frustrate her mother's delicate scheming, even though she did perceive it. But Cynthia had come across too many varieties of flirtation, admiration, and even passionate love, to be for a moment at fault as to the quiet friendly nature of Osborne's attentions. She received him always as a sister might a brother. It was different when Roger returned from his election as Fellow of Trinity. The trembling diffidence, the hardly suppressed ardour of his manner, made Cynthia understand before long with what kind of love she had now to deal. She did not put it into so many words—no, not even in her secret heart—but she recognized the difference between Roger's relation to her and Osborne's long before Mrs. Gibson found it out. Molly was, however, the first to discover the nature of Roger's attention. The first time they saw him after the ball, it came out to her observant eyes. Cynthia had not been looking well since that evening ; she went slowly about the house, pale and heavy-eyed ; and, fond as she usually was of exercise and the free fresh air, there was hardly any persuading her now to go out for a walk. Molly watched this fading with tender anxiety, but to all her questions as to whether she had felt over-fatigued with her dancing, whether anything had occurred to annoy her, and all such inquiries, she replied in languid negatives. Once Molly touched on Mr. Preston's name, and found that this was a subject on which Cynthia was raw ; now, Cynthia's face lighted up with spirit, and her whole body showed her ill-repressed agitation, but she only said a few sharp words, expressive of anything but kindly feeling towards the gentleman, and then bade Molly never name his name to her again. Still, the latter could not imagine that he

was more than intensely distasteful to her friend, as well as to herself; he could not be the cause of Cynthia's present indisposition. But this indisposition lasted so many days without change or modification, that even Mrs. Gibson noticed it, and Molly became positively uneasy. Mrs. Gibson considered Cynthia's quietness and languor as the natural consequence of "dancing with everybody who asked her" at the ball. Partners whose names were in the "Red Book" would not have produced half the amount of fatigue, according to Mrs. Gibson's judgment apparently, and if Cynthia had been quite well, very probably she would have hit the blot in her mother's speech with one of her touches of sarcasm. Then, again, when Cynthia did not rally, Mrs. Gibson grew impatient, and accused her of being fanciful and lazy; at length, and partly at Molly's instance, there came an appeal to Mr. Gibson, and a professional examination of the supposed invalid, which Cynthia hated more than anything, especially when the verdict was, that there was nothing very much the matter, only a general lowness of tone, and depression of health and spirits, which would soon be remedied by tonics, and, meanwhile, she was not to be roused to exertion.

"If there is one thing I dislike," said Cynthia to Mr. Gibson, after he had pronounced tonics to be the cure for her present state, "it is the way doctors have of giving tablespoonfuls of nauseous mixtures as a certain remedy for sorrows and cares." She laughed up in his face as she spoke: she had always a pretty word and smile for him, even in the midst of her loss of spirits.

"Come! you acknowledge you have 'sorrows' by that speech; we'll make a bargain: if you'll tell me your sorrows and cares, I'll try and find some other remedy for them than giving you what you are pleased to term my nauseous mixtures."

"No," said Cynthia, colouring; "I never said I had sorrows or cares; I spoke generally. What should I have a sorrow about—you and Molly are only too kind to me," her eyes filling with tears.

"Well, well, we'll not talk of such gloomy things, and you shall have some sweet emulsion to disguise the taste of the bitters I shall be obliged to fall back upon."

"Please, don't. If you but knew how I dislike emulsions and disguises! I do want bitters—and if I sometimes—if I'm obliged to—it I'm not truthful myself, I do like truth in others—at least, sometimes." She ended her sentence with another smile, but it was rather faint and watery..

Now the first person out of the house to notice Cynthia's change of look and manner was Roger Hamley—and yet he did not see her until, under the influence of the nauseous mixture, she was beginning to recover. But his eyes were scarcely off her during the first five minutes he was in the room. All the time he was trying to talk to Mrs. Gibson in reply to her civil platitudes, he was studying Cynthia; and at the first convenient pause he came and stood before Molly, so as to interpose his person

between her and the rest of the room; for some visitors had come in subsequent to his entrance.

"Molly, how ill your sister is looking! What is it? Has she had advice? You must forgive me, but so often those who live together in the same house don't observe the first approaches of illness."

Now Molly's love for Cynthia was fast and unwavering, but if anything tried it, it was the habit Roger had fallen into of always calling Cynthia Molly's sister in speaking to the latter. From any one else it would have been a matter of indifference to her, and hardly to be noticed; it vexed both ear and heart when Roger used the expression; and there was a curtness of manner as well as of words in her reply.

"Oh! she was over-tired by the ball. Papa has seen her, and says she will be all right very soon."

"I wonder if she wants change of air?" said Roger, meditatively. "I wish—I do wish we could have her at the Hall; you and your mother too, of course. But I don't see how it would be possible—or else how charming it would be!"

Molly felt as if a visit to the Hall under such circumstances would be altogether so different an affair to all her former ones, that she could hardly tell if she should like it or not.

Roger went on,—

"You got our flowers in time, did you not? Ah! you don't know how often I thought of you that evening! And you enjoyed it too, didn't you?—you had plenty of agreeable partners, and all that makes a first ball delightful? I heard that your sister danced every dance."

"It was very pleasant," said Molly, quietly. "But, after all, I'm not sure if I want to go to another just yet; there seems to be so much trouble connected with a ball."

"Ah! you are thinking of your sister, and her not being well?"

"No, I was not," said Molly, rather bluntly. "I was thinking of the dress, and the dressing, and the weariness the next day."

He might think her unfeeling if he liked; she felt as if she had only too much feeling just then, for it was bringing on her a strange contraction of heart. But he was too inherently good himself to put any harsh construction on her speech. Just before he went away, while he was ostensibly holding her hand and wishing her good-by, he said to her in a voice too low to be generally heard,—

"Is there anything I could do for your sister? We have plenty of books, as you know, if she cares for reading." Then, receiving no affirmative look or word from Molly in reply to this suggestion, he went on,— "Or flowers? she likes flowers. Oh! and our forced strawberries are just ready—I will bring some over to-morrow."

"I am sure she will like them," said Molly.

For some reason or other, unknown to the Gibsons, a longer interval than usual occurred between Osborne's visits, while Roger came almost every day, always with some fresh offering by which he openly sought to

relieve Cynthia's indisposition as far as it lay in his power. Her manner to him was so gentle and gracious that Mrs. Gibson became alarmed, lest, in spite of his "uncouthness" (as she was pleased to term it), he might come to be preferred to Osborne, who was so strangely neglecting his own interests, in Mrs. Gibson's opinion. In her quiet way, she contrived to pass many slights upon Roger; but the darts rebounded from his generous nature that could not have imagined her motives, and fastened themselves on Molly. She had often been called naughty and passionate when she was a child; and she thought now that she began to understand that she really had a violent temper. What seemed neither to hurt Roger nor annoy Cynthia made Molly's blood boil; and now she had once discovered Mrs. Gibson's wish to make Roger's visits shorter and less frequent, she was always on the watch for indications of this desire. She read her step-mother's heart when the latter made allusions to the squire's weakness, now that Osborne was absent from the Hall, and that Roger was so often away amongst his friends during the day,—

"Mr. Gibson and I should be so delighted if you could have stopped to dinner; but, of course, we cannot be so selfish as to ask you to stay when we remember how your father would be left alone. We were saying yesterday we wondered how he bore his solitude, poor old gentleman!"

Or, as soon as Roger came with his bunch of early roses, it was desirable for Cynthia to go and rest in her own room, while Molly had to accompany Mrs. Gibson on some improvised errand or call. Still Roger, whose object was to give pleasure to Cynthia, and who had, from his boyhood, been always certain of Mr. Gibson's friendly regard, was slow to perceive that he was not wanted. If he did not see Cynthia, that was his loss; at any rate, he heard how she was, and left her some little thing which he believed she would like, and was willing to risk the chance of his own gratification by calling four or five times in the hope of seeing her once. At last there came a day when Mrs. Gibson went beyond her usual negative ~~snubbiness~~, and when, in some unwonted fit of crossness, for she was a very placid-tempered person in general, she was guilty of positive rudeness.

Cynthia was very much better. Tonics had ministered to a mind diseased, though she hated to acknowledge it; her pretty bloom and much of her light-heartedness had come back, and there was no cause remaining for anxiety. Mrs. Gibson was sitting at her embroidery in the drawing-room, and the two girls were at the window, Cynthia laughing at Molly's earnest endeavours to imitate the French accent in which the former had been reading a page of Voltaire. For the duty, or the farce, of settling to "improving reading" in the mornings was still kept up, although Lord Hollingsford, the unconscious suggestor of the idea, had gone back to town without making any of the efforts to see Molly again that Mrs. Gibson had anticipated on the night of the ball. That Alnaschar vision had fallen to the ground. It was as yet early morning; a delicious, fresh, lovely June day, the air redolent with the scents of flower-growth and bloom;

and half the time the girls had been ostensibly employed in the French reading they had been leaning out of the open window trying to reach a cluster of climbing roses. They had secured them at last, and the buds lay on Cynthia's lap, but many of the petals had fallen off, so, though the perfume lingered about the window-seat, the full beauty of the flowers had passed away. Mrs. Gibson had once or twice reproved them for the merry noise they had been making, which hindered her in the business of counting the stitches in her pattern ; and she had set herself a certain quantity to do that morning before going out, and was of that nature which attaches infinite importance to fulfilling small resolutions, made about indifferent trifles without any reason whatever.

"Mr. Roger Hamley," was announced. "So tiresome!" said Mrs. Gibson, almost in his hearing, as she pushed away her embroidery frame. She put out her cold, motionless hand to him, with a half-murmured word of welcome, still eyeing her lost embroidery. He took no apparent notice, and passed on to the window.

"How delicious!" said he. "No need for any more Hamley roses now yours are out."

"I agree with you," said Mrs. Gibson, replying to him before either Cynthia or Molly could speak, though he addressed his words to them. "You have been very kind in bringing us flowers so long; but now our own are out we need not trouble you any more."

He looked at her with a little surprise clouding his honest face; it was perhaps more at the tone than the words. Mrs. Gibson, however, had been bold enough to strike the first blow, and she determined to go on as opportunity offered. Molly would perhaps have been more pained if she had not seen Cynthia's colour rise. She waited for her to speak, if need were; for she knew that Roger's defence, if defence were needed, might be safely entrusted to Cynthia's ready wit.

He put out his hand for the shattered cluster of roses that lay in Cynthia's lap.

"At any rate," said he, "my trouble—if Mrs. Gibson considers it has been a trouble to me—will be over-paid, if I may have this."

"Old lamps for new," said Cynthia, smiling as she gave it to him. "I wish one could always buy nosegays such as you have brought us, as cheaply."

"You forget the waste of time that, I think, we must reckon as part of the payment," said her mother. "Really, Mr. Hamley, we must learn to shut our doors on you if you come so often, and at such early hours! I settle myself to my own employment regularly after breakfast till lunch-time; and it is my wish to keep Cynthia and Molly to a course of improving reading and study—so desirable for young people of their age, if they are ever to become intelligent, companionable women; but with early visitors it is quite impossible to observe any regularity of habits."

All this was said in that sweet, false tone which of late had gone through Molly like the scraping of a slate-pencil on a slate. Roger's face changed.

His ruddy colour grew paler for a moment, and he looked grave and not pleased. In another moment the wonted frankness of expression returned. Why should not he, he asked himself, believe her? it was early to call; it did interrupt regular occupation. So he spoke, and said,—

“I believe I have been very thoughtless—I’ll not come so early again; but I had some excuse to-day: my brother told me you had made a plan for going to see Hurst Wood when the roses were out, and they are earlier than usual this year—I’ve been round to see. He spoke of a long day there, going before lunch ——”

“The plan was made with Mr. Osborne Hamley. I could not think of going without him!” said Mrs. Gibson, coldly.

“I had a letter from him this morning, in which he named your wish, and he says he fears he cannot be at home till they are out of flower. I daresay they are not much to see in reality, but the day is so lovely I thought that the plan of going to Hurst Wood would be a charming excuse for being out of doors.”

“Thank you. How kind you are! and so good, too, in sacrificing your natural desire to be with your father as much as possible.”

“I am glad to say my father is so much better than he was in the winter that he spends much of his time out of doors in his fields. He has been accustomed to go about alone, and I—we think that as great a return to his former habits as he can be induced to make, is the best for him.”

“And when do you return to Cambridge?”

There was some hesitation in Roger’s manner as he replied,—

“It is uncertain. You probably know that I am a Fellow of Trinity now. I hardly yet know what my future plans may be; I am thinking of going up to London soon.”

“Ah! London is the true place for a young man,” said Mrs. Gibson, with decision, as if she had reflected a good deal on the question. “If we were not that we really are so busy this morning, I should have been tempted to make an exception to our general rule; one more exception for your early visits have made us make too many already. Perhaps, however, we may see you again before you go?”

“Certainly I shall come,” replied he, rising to take his leave, and still holding the demolished roses in his hand. Then, addressing himself more especially to Cynthia, he added, “My stay in London will not exceed a fortnight or so—is there anything I can do for you—or you?” turning a little to Molly.

“No, thank you very much,” said Cynthia, very sweetly, and then, acting on a sudden impulse, she leant out of the window, and gathered him some half-opened roses. “You deserve these; do throw that poor shabby bunch away.”

His eyes brightened, his cheeks glowed. He took the offered bunch, but did not throw away the other bunch.

“At any rate, I may come after lunch is over, and the afternoons and the evenings will be the most delicious time of day a month hence.” He

said this to both Molly and Cynthia, but in his heart he addressed it to the latter.

Mrs. Gibson affected not to hear what he was saying, but held out her limp hand once more to him.

"I suppose we shall see you when you return; and pray tell your brother how we are longing to have a visit from him again."

When he had left the room, Molly's heart was quite full. She had watched his face, and read something of his feelings: his disappointment at their non-acquiescence in his plan of a day's pleasure in Hurst Wood, the delayed conviction that his presence was not welcome to the wife of his old friend, which had come so slowly upon him—perhaps, after all, these things touched Molly more keenly than they did him. His bright look when Cynthia gave him the rosebuds indicated a gush of sudden delight more vivid than the pain he had shown by his previous increase of gravity.

"I can't think why he will come at such untimely hours," said Mrs. Gibson, as soon as she heard him fairly out of the house. "It's different from Osborne; we are so much more intimate with him: he came and made friends with us all the time this stupid brother of his was muddling his brains with mathematics at Cambridge. Fellow of Trinity, indeed! I wish he would learn to stay there, and not come intruding here, and assuming that because I asked Osborne to join in a picnic it was all the same to me which brother came."

"In short, mamma, one man may steal a horse, but another must not look over the hedge," said Cynthia, pouting a little.

"And the two brothers have always been treated so exactly alike by their friends, and there has been such a strong friendship between them, that it is no wonder Roger thinks he may be welcome where Osborne is allowed to come at all hours," continued Molly, in high dudgeon. "Roger's 'muddled brains,' indeed! Roger, 'stupid!'"

"Oh, very well, my dears! When I was young it wouldn't have been thought becoming for girls of your age to fly out because a little restraint was exercised as to the hours at which they should receive the young men's calls. And they would have supposed that there might be good reasons why their parents disapproved of the visits of certain gentlemen, even while they were proud and pleased to see some members of the same family."

"But that was what I said, mamma," said Cynthia, looking at her mother with an expression of innocent bewilderment on her face. "One man may ____"

"Be quiet, child! All proverbs are vulgar, and I do believe that is the vulgarest of all. You are really catching Roger Hamley's coarseness, Cynthia!"

"Mamma," said Cynthia, roused to anger, "I don't mind your abusing me, but Mr. Roger Hamley has been very kind to me while I've not been well: I can't bear to hear him disparaged. If he's coarse, I've no

objection to be coarse as well, for it seems to me it must mean kindness and pleasantness, and the bringing of pretty flowers and presents."

Molly's tears were brimming over at these words ; she could have kissed Cynthia for her warm partisanship, but, afraid of betraying emotion, and "making a scene," as Mrs. Gibson called any signs of warm feeling, she laid down her book hastily, and ran upstairs to her room, and locked the door in order to breathe freely. There were traces of tears upon her face when she returned into the drawing-room half-an-hour afterwards, walking straight and demurely up to her former place, where Cynthia still sate and gazed idly out of the window, pouting and displeased ; Mrs. Gibson, meanwhile, counting her stitches aloud with great distinctness and vigour.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUSH-FIGHTING.

DURING all the months that had elapsed since Mrs. Hamley's death, Molly had wondered many a time about the secret she had so unwittingly become possessed of that last day in the Hall library. It seemed so utterly strange and unheard-of a thing to her inexperienced mind, that a man should be married, and yet not live with his wife—that a son should have entered into the holy state of matrimony without his father's knowledge, and without being recognized as the husband of some one known or unknown by all those with whom he came in daily contact, that she felt occasionally as if that little ten minutes of revelation must have been a vision in a dream. Both Roger and Osborne had kept the most entire silence on the subject ever since. Not even a look, or a pause, betrayed any allusion to it ; it even seemed to have passed out of their thoughts. There had been the great sad event of their mother's death to fill their minds on the next occasion of their meeting Molly ; and since then long pauses of intercourse had taken place ; so that she sometimes felt as if each of the brothers must have forgotten how she had come to know their important secret. She often found herself entirely forgetting it, but perhaps the consciousness of it was present to her unawares, and enabled her to comprehend the real nature of Osborne's feelings towards Cynthia. At any rate she never for a moment had supposed that his gentle kind manner towards Cynthia was anything but the courtesy of a friend ; strange to say, in these latter days Molly had looked upon Osborne's relation to herself as pretty much the same as that in which at one time she had considered Roger's ; and she thought of the former as of some one as nearly a brother both to Cynthia and herself, as any young man could well be, whom they had not known in childhood, and who was in nowise related to them. She thought that he was very much improved in manner, and probably in character, by his mother's death. He was no longer sarcastic, or fastidious, or vain, or self-confident. She did not know how often all these styles of talk or of

behaviour were put on to conceal shyness or consciousness, and to veil the real self from strangers.

Osborne's conversation and ways might very possibly have been just the same as before, had he been thrown amongst new people; but Molly only saw him in their own circle in which he was on terms of decided intimacy. Still there was no doubt that he was really improved, though perhaps not to the extent for which Molly gave him credit; and this exaggeration on her part arose very naturally from the fact, that he, perceiving Roger's warm admiration for Cynthia, withdrew a little out of his brother's way; and used to go and talk to Molly in order not to intrude himself between Roger and Cynthia. Of the two, perhaps, Osborne preferred Molly; to her he needed not to talk if the mood was not on him—they were on those happy terms where silence is permissible, and where efforts to act against the prevailing mood of the mind are not required. Sometimes, indeed, when Osborne was in the humour to be critical and fastidious as of yore, he used to vex Roger by insisting upon it that Molly was prettier than Cynthia.

"You mark my words, Roger. Five years hence the beautiful Cynthia's red and white will have become just a little coarse, and her figure will have thickened, while Molly's will only have developed into more perfect grace. I don't believe the girl has done growing yet; I am sure she is taller than when I first saw her last summer."

"Miss Kirkpatrick's eyes must always be perfection. I cannot fancy any could come up to them: soft, grave, appealing, tender; and such a heavenly colour—I often try to find something in nature to compare them to; they are not like violets—that blue in the eyes is too like physical weakness of sight; they are not like the sky—that colour has something of cruelty in it."

"Come don't go on trying to match her eyes as if you were a draper, and they a bit of ribbon; say at once 'her eyes are loadstars,' and have done with it! I set up Molly's grey eyes and curling black lashes, long odds above the other young woman's; but, of course, it's all a matter of taste."

And now both Osborne and Roger had left the neighbourhood. In spite of all that Mrs. Gibson had said about Roger's visits being ill-timed and intrusive, she began to feel as if they had been a very pleasant variety, now they had ceased altogether. He brought in a whiff of a new atmosphere from that of Hollingsford. He and his brother had been always ready to do numberless little things which only a man can do for woman; small services which Mr. Gibson was always too busy to render. For the good doctor's business grew upon him. He thought that this increase was owing to his greater skill and experience, and he would probably have been mortified if he could have known how many of his patients were solely biased in sending for him, by the fact that he was employed at the Towers. Something of this sort must have been contemplated in the low scale of payment adopted long ago by the Cumnor family. Of

itself the money he received for going to the Towers would hardly have paid him for horse-flesh, but then as 'Lady Cumnor in her younger days had worded it,—

"It is such a thing for a man just setting up in practice for himself to be able to say he attends at this house!"

So the prestige was tacitly sold and paid for; but neither buyer nor seller defined the nature of the bargain. On the whole, it was as well that Mr. Gibson spent so much of his time from home. He sometimes thought so himself when he heard his wife's plaintive fret or pretty babble over totally indifferent things, and perceived of how flimsy a nature were all her fine sentiments. Still, he did not allow himself to repine over the step he had taken; he wilfully shut his eyes and waxed up his ears to many small things that he knew would have irritated him if he had attended to them; and, in his solitary rides, he forced himself to dwell on the positive advantages that had accrued to him and his through his marriage. He had obtained an unexceptionable chaperone, if not a tender mother, for his little girl; a skilful manager of his formerly disorderly household; a woman who was graceful and pleasant to look at for the head of his table. Moreover, Cynthia reckoned for something in the favourable side of the balance. She was a capital companion for Molly; and the two were evidently very fond of each other. The feminine companionship of the mother and daughter was agreeable to him as well as to his child,—when Mrs. Gibson was moderately sensible and not over-sentimental, he mentally added; and then he checked himself, for he would not allow himself to become more aware of her faults and foibles by defining them. At any rate, she was harmless, and wonderfully just to Molly for a stepmother. She piqued herself upon this indeed, and would often call attention to the fact of her being unlike other women in this respect. Just then sudden tears came into Mr. Gibson's eyes, as he remembered how quiet and undemonstrative his little Molly had become in her general behaviour to him; but how once or twice, when they had met upon the stairs, or were otherwise unwitnessed, she had caught him and kissed him—hand or cheek—in a sad passionateness of affection. But in a moment he began to whistle an old Scotch air he had heard in his childhood, and which had never recurred to his memory since; and five minutes afterwards he was too busily treating a case of white swelling in the knee of a little boy, and thinking how to relieve the poor mother, who went out charring all day, and had to listen to the moans of her child all night, to have any thought for his own cares, which, if they really existed, were of so trifling a nature compared to the hard reality of this hopeless woe.

Osborne came home first. He returned, in fact, not long after Roger had gone away; but he was languid and unwell, and, though he did not complain, he felt unequal to any exertion. Thus a week or more elapsed before any of the Gibsons knew that he was at the Hall; and then it was only by chance that they became aware of it. Mr. Gibson met him near Hamley; the acute surgeon noticed the gait of the man

as he came near, before he recognized who it was. When he overtook him he said,—

“ Why, Osborne, is it you? I thought it was an old man of fifty loitering before me! I didn’t know you had come back.”

“ Yes,” said Osborne, “ I’ve been at home nearly ten days. I dare-say I ought to have called on your people, for I made a half promise to Mrs. Gibson to let her know as soon as I returned; but the fact is, I’m feeling very good-for-nothing,—this air oppresses me; I could hardly breathe in the house, and yet I’m already tired with this short walk.”

“ You’d better get home at once; and I’ll call and see you as I come back from Rowe’s.”

“ No, you mustn’t, on any account!” said Osborne, hastily; “ my father is annoyed enough about my going from home, so often, he says, though it was six weeks. He puts down all my languor to my having been away,—he keeps the purse-strings, you know,” he added, with a faint smile, “ and I’m in the unlucky position of a penniless heir, and I’ve been brought up so—In fact, I must leave home from time to time, and, if my father gets confirmed in this notion of his that my health is worse for my absence, he will stop the supplies altogether.”

“ May I ask where you do spend your time when you are not at Hanley Hall?” asked Mr. Gibson, with some hesitation in his manner.

“ No!” replied Osborne, reluctantly. “ I will tell you this:—I stay with friends in the country. I lead a life which ought to be conducive to health, because it is thoroughly simple, rational, and happy. And now I’ve told you more about it than my father himself knows. He never asks me where I have been; and I shouldn’t tell him if he did—at least, I think not.”

Mr. Gibson rode on by Osborne’s side, not speaking for a moment or two.

“ Osborne, whatever scrapes you may have got into, I should advise your telling your father boldly out. I know him; and I know he’ll be angry enough at first, but he’ll come round, take my word for it; and, somehow or another, he’ll find money to pay your debts and set you free, if it’s that kind of difficulty; and if it’s any other kind of entanglement, why still he’s your best friend. It’s this estrangement from your father that’s telling on your health, I’ll be bound.”

“ No,” said Osborne, “ I beg your pardon; but it’s not that; I am really out of order. I daresay my unwillingness to encounter any displeasure from my father is the consequence of my indisposition; but I’ll answer for it, it is not the cause of it. My instinct tells me there is something really the matter with me.”

“ Come, don’t be setting up your instinct against the profession,” said Mr. Gibson, cheerily.

He dismounted, and throwing the reins of his horse round his arm, he looked at Osborne’s tongue and felt his pulse, asking him various questions. At the end he said,—

"We'll soon bring you about, though I should like a little more quiet talk with you, without this tugging brute for a third. If you'll manage to ride over and lunch with us to-morrow, Dr. Nicholls will be with us; he's coming over to see old Rowe; and you shall have the benefit of the advice of two doctors instead of one. Go home now, you've had enough exercise for the middle of a day as hot as this is. And don't mope in the house, listening to the maunderings of your stupid instinct."

"What else have I to do?" said Osborne. "My father and I are not companions; one can't read and write for ever, especially when there is no end to be gained by it. I don't mind telling you—but in confidence, recollect—that I've been trying to get some of my poems published; but there's no one like a publisher for taking the conceit out of one. Not a man among them would take them as a gift."

"Oho! so that's it, is it, Master Osborne? I thought there was some mental cause for this depression of health. I wouldn't trouble my head about it, if I were you, though that's always very easily said, I know. Try your hand at prose, if you can't manage to please the publishers with poetry; but, at any rate, don't go on fretting over spilt milk. But I mustn't lose my time here. Come over to us to-morrow, as I said; and what with the wisdom of two doctors, and the wit and folly of three women, I think we shall cheer you up a bit."

So saying, Mr. Gibson remounted, and rode away at the long, sling trot so well known to the country people as the doctor's pace.

"I don't like his looks," thought Mr. Gibson to himself at night, as over his daybooks he reviewed the events of the day. And then his pulse. But how often we're all mistaken; and, ten to one, my own hidden enemy lies closer to me than his does to him—even taking the worse view of the case.

Osborne made his appearance a considerable time before luncheon the next morning; and no one objected to the earliness of his call. He was feeling better. There were few signs of the invalid about him; and what few there were disappeared under the bright pleasant influence of such a welcome as he received from all. Molly and Cynthia had much to tell him of the small proceedings since he went away, or to relate the conclusions of half-accomplished projects. Cynthia was often on the point of some gay, careless inquiry as to where he had been, and what he had been doing; but Molly, who conjectured the truth, as often interfered to spare him the pain of equivocation—a pain that her tender conscience would have felt for him, much more than he would have felt it for himself.

Mrs. Gibson's talk was desultory, complimentary, and sentimental, after her usual fashion; but still, on the whole, though Osborne smiled to himself at much that she said, it was soothing and agreeable. Presently, Dr. Nicholls and Mr. Gibson came in; the former had had some conference with the latter on the subject of Osborne's health; and, from time to time, the skilful old physician's sharp and observant eyes gave a comprehensive look at Osborne.

Then there was lunch, when every one was merry and hungry, excepting the hostess, who was trying to train her midday appetite into the gentlest of all ways, and thought (falsely enough) that Dr. Nicholls was a good person to practise the semblance of ill-health upon, and that he would give her the proper civil amount of commiseration for her ailments, which every guest ought to bestow upon a hostess who complains of her delicacy of health. The old doctor was too cunning a man to fall into this trap. He would keep recommending her to try the coarsest viands on the table; and, at last, he told her if she could not fancy the cold beef to try a little with pickled onions. There was a twinkle in his eye as he said this, that would have betrayed his humour to any observer; but Mr. Gibson, Cynthia, and Molly were all attacking Osborne on the subject of some literary preference he had expressed, and Dr. Nicholls had Mrs. Gibson quite at his mercy. She was not sorry when luncheon was over to leave the room to the three gentlemen; and ever afterwards she spoke of Dr. Nicholls as "that bear."

Presently, Osborne came upstairs, and, after his old fashion, began to take up new books, and to question the girls as to their music. Mr. Gibson had to go out and pay some calls, so he left the three together; and after a while they adjourned into the garden, Osborne lounging on a chair, while Molly employed herself busily in tying up carnations, and Cynthia gathered flowers in her careless, graceful way.

"I hope you notice the difference in our occupations, Mr. Hamley. Molly, you see, devotes herself to the useful, and I to the ornamental. Please, under what head do you class what you are doing? I think you might help one of us, instead of looking on like the Grand Seigneur."

"I don't know what I can 'do,'" said he, rather plaintively. "I should like to be useful, but I don't know how; and my day is past for purely ornamental work. You must let me be, I am afraid. Besides, I am really rather exhausted by being questioned and pulled about by those good doctors."

"Why, you don't mean to say they have been attacking you since lunch!" exclaimed Molly.

"Yes; indeed, they have; and they might have gone on till now if Mrs. Gibson had not come in opportunely."

"I thought mamma had gone out some time ago!" said Cynthia, catching wafts of the conversation as she flitted hither and thither among the flowers.

"She came into the dining-room not five minutes ago. Do you want her, for I see her crossing the hall at this very moment?" and Osborne half rose.

"Oh, not at all!" said Cynthia. "Only she seemed to be in such a hurry to go out, I fancied she had set off long ago. She had some errand to do for Lady Cumnor, and she thought she could manage to catch the housekeeper, who is always in the town on Thursday."

"Are the family coming to the Towers this autumn?"

"I believe so. But I don't know, and I don't much care. They don't take kindly to me," continued Cynthia, "and so I suppose I am not generous enough to take kindly to them."

"I should have thought that such a very unusual blot in their discrimination would have interested you in them as extraordinary people," said Osborne, with a little air of conscious gallantry.

"Isn't that a compliment?" said Cynthia, after a pause of mock meditation. "If any one pays me a compliment, please let it be short and clear. I'm very stupid at finding out hidden meanings."

"Then such speeches as 'you are very pretty,' or 'you have charming manners,' are what you prefer. Now, I pique myself on wrapping up my sugar-plums delicately."

"Then would you please to write them down, and at my leisure I'll parse them."

"No! It would be too much trouble. I'll meet you half way, and study clearness next time."

"What are you two talking about?" said Molly, resting on her light spade.

"It's only a discussion on the best way of administering compliments," said Cynthia, taking up her flower-basket again, but not going out of the reach of the conversation.

"I don't like them at all in any way," said Molly. "But, perhaps, it's rather sour grapes with me," she added.

"Nonsense!" said Osborne. "Shall I tell you what I heard of you at the ball?"

"Or shall I provoke Mr. Preston," said Cynthia, "to begin upon you? It is like turning a tap, such a stream of pretty speeches flow out at the moment." Her lip curled with scorn.

"For you, perhaps," said Molly; "but not for me."

"For any woman. It is his notion of making himself agreeable. If you dare me, Molly, I will try the experiment, and you'll see with what success."

"No, don't, pray!" said Molly, in a hurry. "I do so dislike him!"

"Why?" said Osborne, roused to a little curiosity by her vehemence.

"Oh! I don't know. He never seems to know what one is feeling."

"He wouldn't care if he did know," said Cynthia. "And he might know he is not wanted."

"If he chooses to stay, he cares little whether he is wanted or not."

"Come, this is very interesting," said Osborne. "It is like the strophe and anti-strophe in a Greek chorus. Pray, go on."

"Don't you know him?" asked Molly.

"Yes, by sight, and I think we were once introduced. But, you know, we are much farther from Ashcombe, at Hamley, than you are here, at Hollingford."

"Oh! but he is coming to take Mr. Sheepshanks' place, and then he will live here altogether," said Molly.

"Molly! who told you that?" said Cynthia, in quite a different tone of voice to that in which she had been speaking hitherto.

"Papa, didn't you hear him? Oh, no! it was before you were down this morning. Papa met Mr. Sheepshanks yesterday, and he told him it was all settled: you know we heard a rumour about it in the spring!"

Cynthia was very silent after this. Presently, she said that she had gathered all the flowers she wanted, and that the heat was so great she would go indoors. And then Osborne went away. But Molly had set herself a task to dig up such roots as had already flowered, and to put down some bedding-out plants in their stead. Tired and heated as she was she finished it, and then went upstairs to rest, and change her dress. According to her wont, she sought for Cynthia; there was no reply to her soft knock at the bedroom-door opposite to her own, and, thinking that Cynthia might have fallen asleep, and be lying uncovered in the draught of the open window, she went in softly. Cynthia was lying upon the bed as if she had thrown herself down on it without caring for the ease or comfort of her position. She was very still; and Molly took a shawl, and was going to place it over her, when she opened her eyes, and spoke,—

"Is that you, dear? Don't go. I like to know that you are there."

She shut her eyes again, and remained quite quiet for a few minutes longer. Then she started up into a sitting posture, pushed her hair away from her forehead and burning eyes, and gazed intently at Molly.

"Do you know what I've been thinking, dear?" said she. "I think I've been long enough here, and that I had better go out as a governess."

"Cynthia, what do you mean?" asked Molly, aghast. "You've been asleep—you've been dreaming. You're over-tired," continued she, sitting down on the bed, and taking Cynthia's passive hand, and stroking it softly—a mode of caressing that had come down to her from her mother—whether as an hereditary instinct, or as a lingering remembrance of the tender ways of the dead woman, Mr. Gibson often wondered within himself when he observed it.

"Oh, how good you are, Molly. I wonder, if I had been brought up like you, if I should have been as good. But I've been tossed about so."

"Then, don't go and be tossed about any more," said Molly, softly.

"Oh, dear! I had better go. But, you see, no one ever loved me like you, and, I think, your father—doesn't he, Molly? And it's hard to be driven out."

"Cynthia, I am sure you're not well, or else you're not half awake."

Cynthia sat with her arms encircling her knees, and looking at vacancy.

"Well!" said she, at last, heaving a great sigh; but, then, smiling as she caught Molly's anxious face, "I suppose there's no escaping one's doom; and anywhere else I should be much more forlorn and unprotected."

"What do you mean by your doom?"

"Ah, that's telling, little one," said Cynthia, who seemed now to have recovered her usual manner. "I don't mean to have one, though. I think that, though I am an arrant coward at heart, I can show fight."

"With whom?" asked Molly, really anxious to probe the mystery—if, indeed, there was one—to the bottom, in the hope of some remedy being found for the distress Cynthia was in when first Molly had entered.

Again Cynthia was lost in thought; then, catching the echo of Molly's last words in her mind, she said,—

"'With whom?'—oh! show fight with whom—with my doom, to be sure. Am not I a grand young lady to have a doom? Why, Molly, child, how pale and grave you look!" said she, kissing her all of a sudden. "You ought not to care so much for me; I'm not good enough for you to worry yourself about me. I've given myself up a long time ago as a heartless baggage!"

"Nonsense! I wish you wouldn't talk so, Cynthia!"

"And I wish you wouldn't always take me 'at the foot of the letter,' as an English girl at school used to translate it. Oh, how hot it is! Is it never going to get cool again? My child! what dirty hands you've got, and face too; and I've been kissing you—I daresay I'm dirty with it, too. Now, isn't that like one of mamma's speeches? But, for all that, you look more like a delving Adam than a spinning Eve."

This had the effect that Cynthia intended; the daintily clean Molly became conscious of her soiled condition, which she had forgotten while she had been attending to Cynthia, and she hastily withdrew to her own room. When she had gone, Cynthia noiselessly locked the door; and, taking her purse out of her desk, she began to count over her money. She counted it once—she counted it twice, as if desirous of finding out some mistake which should prove it to be more than it was; but the end of it all was a sigh.

"What a fool!—what a fool I was!" said she, at length. "But even if I don't go out as a governess, I shall make it up in time."

Some weeks after the time he had anticipated when he had spoken of his departure to the Gibsons, Roger returned back to the Hall. One morning when he called, Osborne told them that his brother had been at home for two or three days.

"And why has he not come here, then?" said Mrs. Gibson. "It is not kind of him not to come and see us as soon as he can. Tell him I say so—pray do."

Osborne had gained one or two ideas as to her treatment of Roger the last time he had called. Roger had not complained of it, or even mentioned it, till that very morning; when Osborne was on the point of starting, and had urged Roger to accompany him, the latter had told him something of what Mrs. Gibson had said. He spoke rather as if he was more amused than annoyed; but Osborne could read that he was chagrined at those restrictions placed upon calls which were the greatest pleasure of his life. Neither of them let out the suspicion which had

entered both their minds—the well-grounded suspicion arising from the fact that Osborne's visits, be they paid early or late, had never yet been met with a repulse.

Osborne now reproached himself with having done Mrs. Gibson injustice. She was evidently a weak, but probably a disinterested, woman ; and it was only a little bit of ill-temper on her part which had caused her to speak to Roger as she had done.

"I daresay it was rather impertinent of me to call at such an untimely hour," said Roger.

"Not at all ; I call at all hours, and nothing is ever said about it. It was just because she was put out that morning. I'll answer for it she's sorry now, and I'm sure you may go there at any time you like in the future."

Still, Roger did not choose to go again for two or three weeks, and the consequence was that the next time he called the ladies were out. Once again he had the same ill-luck, and then he received a little pretty three-cornered note from Mrs. Gibson :—

MY DEAR SIR,—How is it that you are become so formal all on a sudden, leaving cards, instead of awaiting our return ? Fie for shame ! If you had seen the faces of disappointment that I did when the horrid little bits of pasteboard were displayed to our view, you would not have borne malice against me so long; for it is really punishing others as well as my naughty self. If you will come to-morrow—as early as you like—and lunch with us, I'll own I was cross, and acknowledge myself a penitent.—Yours ever,

HYACINTH C. F. GIBSON.

There was no resisting this, even if there had not been strong inclination to back up the pretty words. Roger went, and Mrs. Gibson caressed and petted him in her sweetest, silkiest manner. Cynthia looked lovelier than ever to him for the slight restriction that had been laid for a time on their intercourse. She might be gay and sparkling with Osborne ; with Roger she was soft and grave. Instinctively she knew her men. She saw that Osborne was only interested in her because of her position in a family with whom he was intimate ; that his friendship was without the least touch of sentiment ; and that his admiration was only the warm criticism of an artist for unusual beauty. But she felt how different Roger's relation to her was. To him she was *the one*, alone, peerless. If his love was prohibited, it would be long years before he could sink down into tepid friendship ; and to him her personal loveliness was only one of the many charms that made him tremble into passion. Cynthia was not capable of returning such feelings ; she had had too little true love in her life, and perhaps too much admiration to do so ; but she appreciated this honest ardour, this loyal worship that was new to her experience. Such appreciation, and such respect for his true and affectionate nature, gave a serious tenderness to her manner to Roger, which allured him with a fresh and separate grace. Molly sate by, and wondered how it would all end, or, rather, how soon it would all end, for she thought that no girl could resist

such reverent passion; and on Roger's side there could be no doubt—alas! there could be no doubt. An older spectator might have looked far ahead, and thought of the question of pounds, shillings, and pence. Where was the necessary income for a marriage to come from? Roger had his fellowship now, it is true; but the income of that would be lost if he married; he had no profession, and the life interest of the two or three thousand pounds that he inherited from his mother, belonged to his father. This older spectator might have been a little surprised at the *empressement* of Mrs. Gibson's manner to a younger son, always supposing this said spectator to have read to the depths of her worldly heart. Never had she tried to be more agreeable to Osborne; and though her attempt was a great failure when practised upon Roger, and he did not know what to say in reply to the delicate flatteries which he felt to be insincere, he saw that she intended him to consider himself henceforward free of the house; and he was too glad to avail himself of this privilege to examine over-closely into what might be her motives for her change of manner. He shut his eyes, and chose to believe that she was now desirous of making up for her little burst of temper on his previous visit.

The result of Osborne's conference with the two doctors had been certain prescriptions which appeared to have done him much good, and which would in all probability have done him yet more, could he have been free of the recollection of the little patient wife in her solitude near Winchester. He went to her whenever he could; and, thanks to Roger, money was far more plentiful with him now than it had been. But he still shrank, and perhaps even more and more, from telling his father of his marriage. Some bodily instinct made him dread all agitation inexpressibly. If he had not had this money from Roger, he might have been compelled to tell his father all, and to ask for the necessary funds to provide for the wife and the coming child. But with enough in hand, and a secret, though remorseful, conviction that as long as Roger had a penny his brother was sure to have half of it, made him more reluctant than ever to irritate his father by a revelation of his secret. "Not just yet, not just at present," he kept saying both to Roger and to himself. "By and by, if we have a boy, I will call it Roger"—and then visions of poetical and romantic reconciliations brought about between father and son, through the medium of a child, the offspring of a forbidden marriage, became still more vividly possible to him, and at any rate it was a staving-off of an unpleasant thing. He atoned to himself for taking so much of Roger's fellowship money by reflecting that, if Roger married, he would lose this source of revenue; yet Osborne was throwing no impediment in the way of this event, rather forwarding it by promoting every possible means of his brother's seeing the lady of his love. Osborne ended his reflections by convincing himself of his own generosity.

Plague and Pestilence.

DEFINITIONS are, perhaps, better avoided. Nevertheless, it will be found impracticable to convey to the reader any precise ideas of our meaning in many of the observations which follow, without giving at least the more obvious lineaments of pestilence.

Plague, pest, pestilence, are the ancient terms for any disease or means of natural death which rages violently amongst the people. Its idea may be included in these propositions :—To be entitled to the name of pestilence, a disease must be unusually fatal, very rapid in its operation, and must destroy great numbers of victims—quick, severe, widespread.

Neither of these characters, taken alone, will suffice to constitute any disease a pestilence, in the ancient sense of that term. Large numbers may die, but they must die quickly after seizure, and in rapid succession ; the plague must also be spread over a large extent of country, or what is equivalent to that, attack bodies of people very densely crowded together, as in large cities or great armies.

We shall presume, presently, to extend this limited meaning of the word as understood by the ancients ; paying less regard to degree of mortality, or extent of prevalence, and bringing in other qualities.

Leaving, then, its mere destructiveness and extent of prevalence as matters of degree and debate, let us glance at those characteristic features of epidemic diseases which they assume when they rage as pestilences.

One set of features characteristic of pestilence is the *suddenness* of its onset ; its unamenability to the resources of the healing art (whether it be very fatal or not) ; and its over-riding, to a great degree, the concurrence of those usual predisposing causes which, in ordinary epidemics, we are accustomed to look for as generally present.

A second characteristic feature of pestilence, taken in the abstract, is, that it prevails from time to time, and from age to age, under dissimilar forms ; but being seldom absent for many years together from some quarter of the earth, under one or more of its numerous phases.

Thirdly, any succeeding form which pestilence assumes may bear no appreciable relation, pathologically speaking, to its immediate, or, indeed, to any predecessor ; yet one special form has been frequently repeated several times in succession during a single epoch of the world's history.

Nor, fourthly, can these individual forms of pestilence be collated with any particular or corresponding form of producing agency. Therefore, any predication upon the form which pestilence may next assume in any part of the world, must be out of the question.

These peculiarities (amongst others, perhaps,) give to pestilence,

properly so called, a significance which is not possessed by disease in any other form ; and its study has, therefore, a special bearing upon the well-being of the community, both in its physical and moral aspect.

Pestilences appear in the most ancient records of history ; indeed, it was amongst the earlier denizens of the earth that some of the most remarkable visitations occurred. We pass over the most anciently recorded of all, the destruction of the first-born of Egypt—"the first-born of man, and the first-born of cattle"—as belonging to the domain of Scriptural miracle. We know nothing of the nature of that swift destruction which was carried by the destroying angel (or messenger) on the wings of midnight ; although there have been plenty of conjectures upon a subject which lies entirely outside the region of proof. The *naturalness* of the slaughter, however, need not be called in question. In this instance, as well as in that of the destruction of Sennacherib's host before Jerusalem, it is quite credible that the messenger of death operated through the means of *second causes*, i.e. of the usual excitors of disease.

They who have watched the swift march of pestilence through the plains of India, where, in one night also, thousands are sometimes carried off by cholera—who have seen individuals drop dead within an hour of the first attack,—will not be disposed to cavil at the truth of the Scripture narrative, either in respect of the multitude or the rapidity of the slaughter of a single night. At a time when profane history is perfectly trustworthy, we learn that a pestilence carried off in Rome, in a single day, not less than ten thousand people. And in our own land, within two years of the time at which we write, a pest, scarcely less to be dreaded than any of ancient times—scarlet fever—has stricken down thousands of its feeble victims in a few hours, assuming a magnitude and an extent which, could all the victims of one day be collected together in a mass, would appall the mind of the sternest.

Is the generally received notion that pestilences were much more fatal in ancient than in modern times correct? Does it rest, in fact, upon any reliable data? Viewing them with regard to the space over which they extended, there is no truth in it. Compared with the terrible destructive-ness of some of those of the middle ages, the pestilences of Scripture, as well as the most anciently recorded of profane history, were only as the fatality of our typhus fever compared with the plague of Constantinople.

The dense masses of people which were collected together in the great cities of Asia and Egypt, or which formed or accompanied the armies of such leaders as Xerxes, Cyrus, Zenghis Khan, or Tamerlane, provided a terrible focus for the evolution of animal poisons. The utter ignorance of any sanitary laws amongst these semi-barbarous hosts, their neglect of personal purity, the heat of the climate, favouring rapid putrefaction of animal matters—all these operating upon and with the unbridled passions of such densely-packed multitudes, could scarcely fail to breed a pestilence, whenever those masses remained for any length of time stationary.

Thus, the destruction of Sennacherib's army in a single night may, by

these considerations, be taken out of the category of sheer miracle, and brought within the operation of those secondary causes through which the modern philosopher traces the hand of Providence. For we are by no means to understand that these 185,000 were all fighting men; a large portion of them belonged, doubtless, to that "mixed multitude" of both sexes,—camp-followers, sutlers, merchants, &c.,—which always accompanied an Eastern army, often doubling, or even quadrupling, the number of the actual fighting-men.

It was probably from the impurity which existed in the midst of such vast assemblages that first arose some of those germs of human poison which have been ever since more or less active as seeds of pestilence; breaking forth again and again, as climate, season, and similar influences are found to co-operate with them. Here was first fermented that dreadful disease of Oriental regions—the Syrian leprosy—whose terrible contagiousness led Moses to impose restrictions and penalties upon the unhappy subjects of it, which the *salus populi* could alone justify. Here, too, probably, raged terrible forms of disease now lost, but of which the more modern plague and the cholera may be degenerate types. Here, also, later, *we know*, arose that loathsome disease which has since become the curse of civilized society in every part of the world; and it is only a matter of wonder that it did not make its appearance in earlier and equally licentious times.

The classic authors have handed down to us accounts of several pestilences which occurred during, or previous to, their own times. The most ancient is one, which, so early as 767 before Christ, is said to have desolated the whole known world. This was nearly three hundred years before Herodotus, the father of reliable history, flourished; and, consequently, we have no authentic records of its visitation. But, judging from the terrible and universal visitation of the "Black Death," more than 2,000 years afterward, the tradition of the ancients is not to be rejected. The plague at Athens occurred B.C. 430: about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. This pestilence was probably of the same nature as the plague which has periodically desolated the shores of the Levant, and the ports of Asia Minor, from the earliest times to the present day.

In the reign of Vespasian, A.D. 78, one year before that terrible eruption of Vesuvius by which Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed, Rome was visited by a pestilence, which in one day, at the period of greatest intensity, carried off ten thousand of its inhabitants. There was also a pestilence in Jerusalem in the days of Herod, which, according to Josephus, swept away all sorts of people, "from the highest to the lowest," Herod himself falling a victim to it.

Eusebius mentions a pestilence which desolated the whole Roman world in the days of the Emperor Maximinus, about A.D. 235; although other authorities give the date as A.D. 252, under Gallus. There may have been two visitations of the same pestilence within a few years of each other, as was the case with the "sweating sickness" of the sixteenth century,

and the cholera of our day. Eusebius dwells upon the self-denying and heroic character of the Christians, during this visitation, which astonished the minds of the selfish and terror-stricken heathen.

England was visited, say the Saxon chroniclers, so early as A.D. 762, by a great pestilence; but its nature is not described. The intellectual night which, after the fall of the Western empire, overspread the whole world, hid away all authentic records of pestilence, as of every other matter relating to science, from the time of that mentioned by Pliny, until close upon the period when letters and learning began to emerge from darkness. Consequently, of what occurred in the way of pestilence in mediæval times, from Charlemagne to the fourteenth century, we are left without any trustworthy record.

Towards the close of this period, viz. from 1347 to 1350, Europe was visited by that pestilence which caused the greatest destruction of human life of any other *natural* agency since the world began; and, indeed, if the accounts which have come down to us are to be relied upon, went far towards destroying the human race! It swept over the whole of Europe, from east to west, like a blighting wind, carrying death in its most loathsome form, into every city and every cottage; destroying, in the three or four years during which it raged, one-fourth part of the whole population. Not less than twenty-five millions are believed to have perished in Europe alone, whilst Asia and Africa probably suffered a proportionate loss!

It is difficult for the imagination to grasp such terrible facts. We talk of the slaughter occasioned by wars; by those scourges of the human race—heroes and conquerors! What is all the destruction of life which they have occasioned compared with this of the pestilence “which walketh in darkness,” without head or leader!

We are not left in the dark respecting the origin, course, and symptoms of that scourge of the middle ages—the “Black Death”—as we are regarding the plagues of antiquity. The learned German physician, Hecker, has left nothing to be desired in the history of this plague of plagues; and we also learn from his laborious researches what sort of things these pestilences of old were, in a medical point of view.

The Black Death, like many other plagues of its class, can be traced far back into the remote East; and there is no doubt but that it was the same disease which ravaged China and Tartary in 1338, fifteen years before it arrived on the shores of Europe. There had been a great famine in China, preceded by floods and earthquakes, which alone destroyed 400,000 persons, and in the following year no fewer than five millions died there of this plague. From the remote East it made its way into Europe some years later, for pestilence often travels slowly; accompanying the migrations of men, and being carried about in their clothing and merchandise. It did not arrive in Europe until 1347, fifteen years after its outbreak in China.

“From China,” says Hecker, “the route of the caravans lay to the north of the Caspian Sea, through Central Asia, to Tauria. Here ships were ready to take the produce of the East to Constantinople, the capital

of commerce, and the medium of communication between Asia, Europe, and Africa." Contagion made its way along these channels, and Constantinople and the seaports of Asia Minor were the foci whence the disease was carried to every country of Europe.

Making its way across the European continent, it committed its greatest ravages—save, perhaps, in England—in Italy; raging terribly at Florence, where it was observed and described by the poet Boccaccio. Passing along the shores of the Mediterranean, it invaded France by way of Avignon, spreading thence to England on the one hand, and to Germany on the other; whence, like the cholera of the present day, it doubled back, two years later, to Russia, and so back to the East.

The Black Death, so called from the rapid putrefaction of the bodies of its victims, was of the same nature as the Oriental plague, viz.—a putrid typhus, only of greater malignity. The boils and buboes of the latter disease were found in the former whenever the patient lived long enough to permit their development.

The inhabitants of Europe at that time have been computed at 105 millions—a high estimate. Of these, twenty-five millions, or *one-fourth of the whole*, perished! In England it was still more fatal, owing, probably, to the ruder habits of the people. During the term of one year—viz. from August, 1348, to August, 1349, three-fourths of the whole population perished! Indeed, if we are to credit the annalists of the period, not more than *one-tenth* escaped! Many succumbed in a few hours, like Sennacherib's host: none endured for three days. In France, numbers died on the spot where they were first smitten, as if struck by lightning!

This terrible scourge, having swept over the then known world, committing such destruction of life, and leaving behind it such misery and poverty as the world never saw before nor since, at length died out; never again, we trust, to revisit the earth. It spared neither age, sex, nor condition; the rich and the poor alike succumbed. There died in Venice the aristocratic, no less than 100,000 persons; in Florence the refined, 60,000; in Paris the gay, 50,000; and in London the wealthy, 100,000; whilst in busy, rich, industrious Norwich, there died the almost incredible number of 50,000 persons—nearly the whole, one would suppose, of its inhabitants! At Avignon, the deaths occurred with such frightful rapidity as wholly to baffle the attempts of the living to inter their friends and relatives; and the Pope was obliged to consecrate the Rhone to allow of the dead bodies finding a hallowed resting-place upon its bosom, until it finally committed them to the great deep!

No doubt it was natural for the mind, in ages when physical science was little studied, and when accuracy was sacrificed to mere conjecture or quaint imaginings, to call in supernatural agencies to account for these dire visitations. The wrath of an offended Deity was fixed upon, both by heathen and Christian, to account for the infliction of these scourges. And it must be conceded by the strictest upholders of *natural causes*, that

the apparition of the Black Death *was* preceded and accompanied by extraordinary convulsions of nature. Earthquakes were frequent just before the outbreak, and volcanoes assumed unwonted activity. Swarms of locusts darkened the air, and spread themselves over the land in many parts of Europe. A constant succession of famines and deluges reduced the people to the greatest misery; and *then*, as usual, followed the pestilence. The atmosphere was charged with a "thick, stinking mist," which, "advancing from the East, spread over all Italy;" and there could have been no deception about a matter so palpable to the senses of all. The air over the sea was infected as well as that over the land; and vessels were seen drifting about the ocean, their crews having perished to the last man. It is certainly, therefore, reasonable to conclude, with the learned German to whom we owe almost all that is certainly known of the Black Death, that the atmosphere was really poisoned.

The Black Death was also calamitous in disordering the relations of society, and deranging its morals. During its prevalence the social virtues fell into almost entire abeyance, and the services of religion were neglected. But it is a common observation that profound calamities are generally attended by a deterioration of public morality. Every visitation of pestilence has, to some extent, produced the same result; and the histories of famine, shipwreck, and earthquake testify to the same truth. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is the philosophy of despair, and it is easily carried into the worst licentiousness. Yet, doubtless, there have always been some minds anchored securely in virtue; and instances of heroic self-sacrifice may be counted by thousands.

The services of public worship, instead of being attended with redoubled fervour, as one would imagine would have been the case at such a time of visitation, were entirely neglected. Indeed, there were no priests to officiate. Many were dead; others had fled the contagion of cities, vainly seeking safety in the woods and country places; whilst, of the few that remained, none could be spared from the bed-side of the dying to offer up public prayers for the living.

So soon, however, as the pestilence subsided, a feeling of repentance arose in the breasts of the survivors; soon running, as usual, into the opposite extreme of fanaticism and insane profession. All sorts of fanatical sects received reinforcements; and new ones sprang up, rivalling the old ones in the absurdity of their superstitions, or in the asperity of their practices. Parties of "flagellants" roamed the country, punishing themselves with frightful stripes, and persuading others to follow their example. Brotherhoods of the Cross were formed, whose duty it was to petition Heaven never again to visit the earth with such a tribulation; and, by their austere lives, to ward off the terrible punishment from themselves. There were others who, after this dire visitation, shut themselves up from the world, with a view to excluding any future risk of the disease, and, according to the bent of their dispositions, giving themselves up to licentious sloth or to austere self-denial.

Unlike most other pestilences of which we possess authentic records, the Black Death occurred only once. After slaying countless thousands of human beings, it passed away for ever, but only to give place to other and scarcely less dreadful forms of disease.

About a century and a half elapsed before Europe was again visited by any epidemic sufficiently widespread and destructive to acquire the name of pestilence. For one thing, the population had been so greatly reduced by the Black Death, that there was more elbow-room,—less overcrowding in the cities and large towns. The form in which the Angel of Death next appeared amongst the nations was called the Sweating, or English Sickness; the second name being derived from the circumstance that for many years its ravages were confined to these islands. It first broke out amongst the soldiers of Richmond's army, after the battle of Bosworth Field. This was in 1485. The victorious army then marched to London, where the shouts of joy at the approach of the deliverer were soon exchanged for lamentations over the death and ruin which the victors brought with them.

As long as it lasted, the mortality from this new pestilence was as great as that caused by the Black Death. Of the attacked, scarcely one in a hundred escaped with life. Two lord mayors of London died in succession within a week, and many persons were carried off within a few hours of their first attack; the strong and robust being seized oftener than the weak and sickly. The disorder swept over the land like a hurricane, carrying death wherever it came, and dismay everywhere. The entire visitation lasted but five weeks; but so great was its mortality, that many thousands died in London alone. In Shrewsbury, and some other provincial towns, it was even more fatal in proportion to the population.

The Sweating Sickness differed from the preceding pestilence *toto calo*; it was a violent inflammatory fever which prostrated the powers of life as rapidly as did the pestilences recorded in Scripture, or the cholera of Hindustan, and it was not characterized by an eruption of boils and buboes, or foul ulcers. There was a sweating fever at Rome in the time of Aurelian, which appears to have been nearly identical with the English malady.

There were no less than five successive outbreaks of this pest in England between the years 1485 and 1529. The first four were chiefly confined to this country, or, curiously enough, to English people resident in French towns. The last epidemic, however, spread over Germany and Austria, as far as Turkey. None of them lasted longer than a few weeks, or months; and some were over in a few days.

Pursuing the course which is one great characteristic feature of pestilence—viz., *change of type with equal fatality*—the next form it assumed was that of the Oriental Plague, the terrible scourge of Constantinople and the towns on the shores of the Levant. From these great marts of mediæval commerce, this loathsome disease made many irruptions westward, being conveyed in ships by men and merchandise.

It would occupy too much space to recount the ravages of this form of pestilence during the several centuries, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth inclusive, in which it was the prevailing epidemic; and few readers are ignorant of its character as the Great Plague of London. We must not suppose, however, that this terrible visitation of 1665-66 was the only one from which the metropolis suffered in the seventeenth century, for it lost 85,000 inhabitants by the plague in 1625, forty years before; and again in 1631 there was great mortality. By the "plague" *par excellence*—1665-66—a hundred thousand lives were destroyed in a very few months. Very nearly *one-third* of the whole population!

From the plague, we come to the most destructive and appalling form of pestilence of recent times—the Asiatic cholera. Having its home, perhaps from the remotest ages, on the swampy banks of the great rivers of India, it accompanied the footsteps of man wherever he wandered. The filthy, slothful, and closely packed natives of the great cities of India were sure to be scourged periodically by some form of pestilence; and our armies, so soon as they began to move about along the banks of rivers, or across malarious plains, suffered terrible loss. In a single night, one side of a town, one quarter of an encampment, one wing of an army, would be visited by a form of death as rapid and mysterious as that which slew the army of the Assyrians in the valley of Jehosaphat. Terrible as cholera is in these Northern climes, it is as nothing in *rapidity of killing* to its parent in India. There, in many cases, not more than half an hour elapses between the first seizure and the fatal end. Hundreds are stricken down in a single day; and, as the terrified Assyrian despot hastily withdrew his army back to Nineveh, to escape the destroying messenger of the God of the Israelites, and to save the poor remains of his host, so, in India, the encampment is broken up, and the army marched to fresh ground with all possible speed, in order to get beyond the influence of the pestilence.

Cholera has pursued exactly the same course in Europe as did all the other great plagues (except the Black Death) with which we are acquainted. It is prone to recur. After a first visitation, another soon follows; and the years 1831-32, 1848-49, and 1854 correspond, in this respect, to 1625-31, and 1665-66—the epochs of the great plague.

Whether or no we are destined to receive any more visitations of the plague of cholera, none can tell. Of one thing we are certain—as certain as we can be of anything derived by induction from experience—that in some or other of its forms pestilence will not cease periodically to decimate our race for ages to come; because the conditions from which they spring are removable only by the enlightened application of physiological science to the government of communities, and by the still slower dissemination of civilization amongst ignorant and besotted barbarians. For it is of no use removing inflammable materials from our own premises with a view to render fire impossible, so long as our next-door neighbour is allowed to keep gunpowder on his. If, indeed, we are willing to regard

these visitations in the present day, not as miraculous judgments or punishments for moral delinquencies, but as rebukes for the infraction of natural laws, we may hope that, in generations to come, these plagues may be disarmed of most of their terrors, if they be not altogether banished from the earth. At present they are never long absent from some portion of it. And though we in England live fast, intellectually, in these days, we must not flatter ourselves that pestilence is a thing of a bygone age; that the arts of life have removed us out of its vortex. True, of the conditions out of which it formerly arose, one of them, famine, may be rendered almost innocuous by the more perfect intercommunication of nations; earthquakes have lost their terrors—indeed, are rather looked forward to as scientific lions; volcanoes appear to have gone out; the condition of the atmosphere, everywhere tolerably pure, is daily observed with the greatest minuteness, and every slight variation in it recorded and guarded against.

Since the foregoing portion of this article was written, the public has been startled by the report of an outburst of plague of great severity in Russia and on the Russo-Prussian frontier. The press has teemed with statements, some of which are calculated to excite alarm and dread of a visitation of some of the old forms of pestilence, such as the cholera and the plague. Many contradictory statements have been made, which, on investigation and inquiry in the proper quarter, are found to be baseless; and the true state of the case is much less alarming than it at first appeared. There is neither plague nor cholera in Russia; and therefore the public may banish their fears as to an irruption of either of these justly dreaded forms of pestilence. Typhus fever, which is always prevalent in St. Petersburg in the spring, has assumed unwonted activity and malignity, in consequence, as it would appear, of the crowding into the capital of upwards of forty thousand labourers, seeking work: the result, probably, of the recent measures of the Emperor for the emancipation of the serfs. The poor of Russia always live miserably during the winter,—their food consisting of half-putrid vegetables and sauerkraut, and their drink of bad gin and the foul waters of stagnant canals. Owing to the severity of the climate, they crowd together, dozens of individuals occupying no more room than should be allowed to a single person. In this respect they imitate the Lapps, the Esquimaux, and our own pigs, by endeavouring to supply the scarcity of fuel by economizing the heat arising from their own bodies. These are just the conditions which at all times and in all countries have given rise to the peculiar animal poison which produces typhus in its worst and most fatal form.

We need dread no new form of this fever in this country. It is here already. Typhus has been steadily on the increase in London for the past two years. In November, 1863, a new wing was added to the London Fever Hospital to meet the increasing demand for admission, extending its accommodation from 200 to 270 beds. Typhus is also very prevalent

in some of our large cities, as, for example, Liverpool and Bristol; and nothing but the comparative cleanliness and well-being of our lower classes prevent the epidemic from extending itself into real pestilence.

But the increase of fever in the Russian capital at present appears to be due to the invasion of a new type of the disease; one with which the present generation at least of Russian practitioners are not familiar. This is the *febris recurrens*, or relapsing fever, which has long been known to writers in this country. There have been several epidemics of it in Scotland, and the famine fever of 1847 in Ireland was largely made up of it.

This fever has never assumed a very fatal character in this country, the mortality ranging from three to five per cent. only. That it may be more fatal in Russia we may well believe, owing to the greater misery of a large portion of its population.

There is still a *third* epidemic, according to the most reliable information—that of medical practitioners and the report of our own Ambassador. It ravages the towns in the valley of the Vistula, and is making progress along the North of Germany, and there is nothing to prevent this pest from settling upon our own shores. This epidemic is an inflammatory disease of the membranes of the brain and spinal chord, chiefly affecting children and young persons, and causing convulsions and death with great rapidity. It does not appear to be necessarily connected with filth or want; and, on that account, there is the more reason to dread an invasion of it.

Pestilence, therefore, is as much in our midst as ever. Under a more insidious aspect and less terrifying form, it steals rather than strides through the land; carrying off under the milder names of typhus, small-pox, scarlet fever, a number scarcely less than did the sweating sickness or the plague. Pestilence changes its form at nearly every visitation; so it does its mode of progression. It may no longer sweep away in a few days the population of some large city, or the multitudes of an Oriental army, but it divides itself, minutely and intimately ramifying into every town, village, family, of the land.

Compare the deaths occasioned by that acknowledged pestilence, the Asiatic cholera, and the recently prevalent scarlet fever. In the eight years, 1848-55, chosen specially because they include two epidemics of cholera, viz., those of 1848-9 and 1854, the aggregate deaths from that disease in England and Wales amounted to 83,934. During the same period there died of scarlet fever, without any special epidemic of that disorder, 131,057, or half as many again. If we could have included the year just past, 1863-4, in which a very fatal outbreak of scarlatina swept over a great part of the kingdom, the number would have exceeded 200,000, or nearly three times that of the deaths from the much more dreaded cholera.

And in this view there are many diseases less fatal indeed, but very destructive, when we take the aggregate of isolated cases, which

differ from the more dreaded pestilences only in the amount of their destructiveness *in a given time*. Nay, there are diseases which are *not fatal at all*, or only incidentally so, which cannot be distinguished from true pestilence by any logical rules of classification. The celebrated dancing mania of the fourteenth century, the dance of St. John and St. Vitus, and the tarantula of Italy, were examples of this. So were the extraordinary contortions of the Jumpers, of the religious and hysterical manias of that and later periods, down to the recent scenes of "revivalism" in Ireland. These were *contagious* diseases of the brain and nervous system, a morbid sympathy acting in these cases just as a morbid poison in the atmosphere operated in the others. *Here*, the disease entered by the lungs and skin; *there*, by the eyes and ears. The sight of people affected with these grotesque manias excited an attack in those who witnessed them, until thousands were thrown off the balance of reason, losing all moral consciousness and self-restraint. Nay, the analogy may be carried still further, without overstraining it, down to those epidemic affections of the mind which have led people, by an uncontrollable impulse, now to the commission of such horrid crimes as the persecution of the Jews in the middle ages—now to follow the lead of some fanatical pretender to religious sanctity or special inspiration in this.

These sudden enthusiasms, which, whilst they catch the temper of the ignorant vulgar, "make the judicious grieve," are true pestilences of the mind and nervous system; and they are to be removed or prevented by means parallel to those which are found to be most efficient against the plague or the cholera—viz. by increased cleanliness of thought and conduct.

But it will be impossible to estimate the full bearing of epidemic or pestilential disease upon the interests of society, or to properly appreciate the best means for the reduction or prevention of their ravages without looking closer into their nature, origin, and mode of extension than is generally done. We are accustomed to use the terms "outbreak of epidemic," or "irruption of pestilence," as though, like the sudden bursting forth of flame from the extinct or smouldering crater of a volcano, its occurrence were altogether unexpected and unaccountable. Still clinging to the ancient notions of the origin of pestilence, from some occult condition of the earth or its atmosphere, we ask ourselves how shall we grapple with the mysterious substance, the *sors et origo*, as it seems, of pestilential disease, the knowledge of which is still a sealed volume to us? How shall we set about to prevent the earth from giving forth her hidden vapours, the malarious exhalations of her surface after floods, or the atmosphere from generating its special poisons? How shall we prevent the products of animal and vegetable putrefaction from passing into the atmosphere, and giving birth to fevers and agues? It is clear that over some of these influences we possess no control whatever. We are ignorant of those mutual relations and reactions between the atmosphere and the earth's surface, which, it is more than probable, exert a very constant

and ever-present influence upon human health. But we *can* apply ourselves to the other *factor*—the personal one. Of the two terms of the proposition, we have only one, and that the *minor*, under our control. Given, on the one hand, an unknown influence arising from some unknown atmospheric or telluric condition, or both, and a known *receptive* condition of the human constitution on the other, how are we to prevent the conclusion of the syllogism—pestilence? Clearly by withdrawing the minor proposition from it! Take away the soil upon which the seeds of disease fall, and no pestilences will be engendered; or, if they be, springing from rocky ground, they will quickly disappear.

And it cannot be doubted that most epidemic diseases, until they rage as pestilences, affect localities where the population is crowded together in close, narrow, and dirty dwellings and streets; in towns where the sanitary condition of the people is little cared for; and, particularly, where poverty, dirt, and intemperance abound. And every epidemic disease, when it rages to such an extent as fairly to earn the name of pestilence, takes on the same characteristic, which, we have seen, belonged to all the great plagues of old, viz. *the facility of killing*. It then acquires the power of so depressing the vital forces that they never recover from the effects of the first shock. The statistics of plague, cholera, and the like abundantly prove these facts—facts which are pregnant with hope for a future of cleanliness, purity, and health.

It must, in fairness, be stated, however, that we here encounter one or two awkward facts. We read that the Sweating Sickness attacked, *by preference*, not the weakly and ill-fed, but the strong and healthy amongst the population. This is quite credible, and is also borne out by facts coming under daily observation. Certain epidemics of the present day do not particularly affect filthy or crowded dwellings, but enter the palaces of the wealthy as readily as the hovels of the poor. Instead of concentrating their ravages in densely-peopled towns, they spread over country districts, till the rose-covered cottage or tree-embowered villa furnish up their equal quotas of victims. The late pestilence of scarlet fever was an emphatic instance of this peculiarity. Long before it began its ravages, energetic and practical “sanitarians” had made successful war upon dirt, over crowding, and foul air. “Dirt generates disease, and want and intemperance rivets its chains,” was their watch-cry. “Sweep away the filth, bring in plenty of pure water and fresh air, and you will abolish pestilence by removing the material which generates and supports it.” A common-sense theory, eminently calculated to infuse itself into the practical minds of the mass of the people. But epidemic disease is still rampant,—and why? Because the sanitary reformers grappled with only one of the two heads of the Hydra. Their theory struck at the root of *contagion*, and put to sleep the fears and banished the precautions which the public in former times took against the entry of contagious diseases into their cities and dwellings. Quarantine was abolished, and pest-houses were allowed to go to ruin, and now the extreme *laissez aller* prevails amongst

the mass of the people as regards contagious disorders. Cabs, omnibuses, railways, are recklessly used to convey persons sick of infectious disorders, or, what is more, just recovering from them. They are removed to the seaside and other watering-places, where churches, lodging-houses, and bathing-machines are used to disseminate infection far and wide.

It is clear that the healthy, being the great majority, cannot be removed from the diseased ; therefore, the best means of perfecting our sanitary practice are to be found in the careful segregation of the sick in proper houses of reception. We would have proper receiving-houses provided by the local authorities, whenever contagious or pestilential disorder threatens to enter our towns. In these houses, or temporary hospitals, plain and inexpensive in their arrangements as possible, the sick would receive that care and judicious management which it is impossible they should be able to command at home. They would have every appliance calculated to eliminate the seeds of the disease, to destroy them, and prevent their extension to others. Experienced nurses, guided by medical practitioners on the spot, would be able to do this in a manner which absolutely cannot be attained otherwise.

What means do we already possess of carrying out this desirable object ? Few and miserable indeed. London possesses *one* fever hospital and *one* small-pox hospital for three millions of souls ! These are sadly inadequate, in times of pestilence, even for the wants of the population in the immediate neighbourhood in which they stand. Few of the country hospitals possess any detached fever wards ; some of them absolutely refuse to admit any one sick of a contagious disease within their walls. Diseases which, of all others, require removal from pestilential to a pure atmosphere, are stupidly excluded from the better air, the cleaner apartments, the more nourishing food and careful tendance of an hospital : almost the only means which science places at our disposal for their alleviation !

We cannot believe that the common-sense views of daily life which are everywhere permeating the public mind will be long before they bear some such fruit as this. The essence of Christianity, in its social aspect, is relief to the poor, the sick, and the helpless. There is wealth in abundance, and charity enough, if it were directed into the right channels, to meet any emergency. Let it not be objected to this removal of the sick to proper receptacles, that it would run counter to the feelings of the poor by separating the sick from their friends. Of course those friends are the very persons, in most instances, from whom the infected ought to be separated—the sick child from being the means of striking down the father and the support of a family ; and true kindness and genuine philanthropy will, as usual, be found on the side of sound knowledge.

The English Drama during the Reigns of Elizabeth and James.

PART I.

AT all periods of history the stage has been the mirror of the spirit of the century in which it has arisen. Dramatic poets give form to the ideas of their age, exhibiting its common aims and hopes and wishes on a more magnificent scale than that of daily life. To interpret men to themselves, to express in words what the majority can only feel, and to leave in art a record of past ages to posterity, is the function of all genius, but more especially of the dramatic genius, which rules for its domain the passions and manners of men. But while the stage thus sums up the character of epochs in history, it never ceases to be national. Individuality is the true essence of art, which aims at embodying some general truth in a special and local manifestation. Thus it has been said of Shakspeare, that he described the men of his own time, but that he described them for *all* time. If these remarks be true of other theatres—of the Greek, the Spanish, the French, and the German, each of which in its own way enshrines for us the spirit of a people at one period of the world's development—they may be applied with even greater force to the English. Never since the birth of art in Greece has any nation displayed a dramatic genius so spontaneous and powerful, so thoroughly belonging to the century in which it sprang, and so national in form and spirit. Yet at the same time it is universal by right of its commanding interest, of its insight into nature, of its freedom from any prejudice, of its sympathy with every phase of human feeling, of its meditation upon all the problems that have vexed the world, of its accumulated learning, of its vast experience, and of the liberality with which its wealth was cast unreckoned on the world.

We are not unnaturally led to ask, how our drama came to be thus both the expression of the age and of the race which gave it birth, and also in its influence over thought and in the power of its beauty, to be suited to all intellects and every period of human history. The answer to this question is simple. England at that time was permeated by ideas of universal interest. When our theatre began to flourish Europe had but just emerged from the dark ages. The arts and literature and sciences of Greece and Rome had been revealed. The navies of Italy, Spain, and England, were discovering new lands beyond the ocean. The telescopes of Galileo were opening out fresh worlds beyond the sun. The Bible had been rescued from the libraries of monks: scholars studied it in the language of its authors, and the people read it in their own tongue. The English, more fully than any other nation, had thrown off the political and religious graveclothes of the past. But they took no share in the

development of art and literature until Spain, Italy, and France presented them with the result of tedious labours. Then the English reaped what other men had sown, and in the freshness of their power surveyed the whole domain of human arts and sciences. The luxury and learning of other lands excited their imagination without impairing their vigour or sophisticating their taste. The world lay before them, and for more than half a century they enjoyed its splendour, until again the struggle for social and religious liberty involved them in the hard realities of life. What in those fifty years they saw, the poets wrote. And what they wrote remains for all ages. They beheld the world in its youth, and we still ponder on their words.

The period at which our drama rose was a period of transition. At such times the past and the future are both coloured by imagination ; both shed a splendour on the present. Men were passing from one era to another ; but the old had not yet wholly faded from them, nor had the new appeared. They stood, as it were, between two dreams—a dream of the past full of sinister and splendid reminiscences, and a dream of the future bright with unlimited anticipations. Neither period pressed upon them with the iron weight of actuality. The sordid details of mediæval chivalry had been softened down. But its sentiment remained to inspire the Surreys and the Sidneys of a loftier age—its high enthusiasm and religious zeal, its respect for women, its model of the knightly character, its endurance of hardships, and its brave reliance on a noble cause. The field, again, of wealth and science, over which we plod with heavy and well-regulated footsteps, spread before them like a fairy land of palaces, a region tenanted by wondrous shapes, prodigal of treasure, teeming with strange adventures, and offering the occasion of heroic deeds. To the New World Raleigh sailed with the courage of a Paladin, dreaming to realize the achievements of Arthur and of Amadis. He little knew what unromantic scenes of modern life, and what a commonplace succession of settlers, he inaugurated on the shores of El Dorado.

The power of youth was autocratic in that age. The nations lay "immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world," amid the dust of creeds and empires which fell round them like "the wrecks of a dissolving dream." Refreshed with their long sleep, they rose up strong to shatter the old world. Thought and action were no longer fettered by antique traditions. Instead of the letter, the spirit flashed out clear and free. Every nerve was sensitive to pleasure bordering on pain, and pain that lost itself in ecstasy. There was nothing tame or moderate then. Men saw and coveted and grasped at their desire. If they hated, they slew. If they loved and could not win, again they slew. Blood flowed freely, and life seemed of small account, so strong and turbulent was its tide. Characters were strongly marked and separated from each other by distinct peculiarities. Men had not been rubbed down by contact into uniformity. They prided themselves upon their eccentricities. You might distinguish the inhabitants of different countries, the artisans of different crafts—the

lawyer, the physician, or the churchman—by their clothes, and gait, and language. To adopt new fashions, to cut the beard into fantastic shapes, to wear particoloured garments, to coin fresh oaths, and to affect a style of speech different from one's neighbours, were among the marks of gentle breeding. Instead of curbing their passions, men gloried in their exercise. They concealed nothing, and even language wanted the reserve which civilized society throws over it. Benvenuto Cellini, in his autobiography, presents a graphic picture of his times. He and his comrades killed their rivals in the streets by day ; they girded on their daggers when they went into the courts of justice ; they called up spirits in the ruins of deserted amphitheatres ; they sickened to the death with disappointed vengeance or unhappy love ; they lay for months in prison uncondemned or unaccused ; they read the Bible and the sermons of Savonarola, and made their dungeons echo with psalm-singing ; they broke their fetters and swam streams, and thought that angels had been sent to rescue them ; they carved Madonna and Adonis on the self-same shrine ; they confused the mythology of Olympus with the persons of the Trinity, the oracles of alchemists and necromancers with the voice of prophets, the authority of Virgil, Ovid, and Euripides with that of David and St. Paul ; they prayed one prayer for revenge against their foes, for favour with the women that they loved, and for Paradise in the life to come ; they flung defiance at Popes, and trembled for absolution before a barefooted friar ; they passed men dying by the road, and durst not pity them because a Cardinal had banned and left them there to perish. The most extravagant passions, the wildest superstition, the coldest scepticism, the most earnest faith, and the gravest learning, met in the same persons. Marsilio Ficino lectured on the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle ; but, for all his science, he believed in the occult virtue of amulets and precious stones. Jerome Cardan, who was one of the first pioneers of physical discovery, detailed his visions with greater gravity than his experiments, wrote volumes of predictions which he gathered from the buzzing of a wasp, and killed himself in order to fulfil his dreams. A Cardinal of the Church warned young scholars against reading the Bible, lest they should corrupt their Latin style. A Pope, to help the Sultan, poisoned a Turkish prince, and was rewarded by the present of Christ's seamless coat. To multiply these instances would be easy but useless. Turbulent life was uppermost, reducing the most heterogeneous elements and the most incongruous emotions to one uniform existence of intense activity.

Nor was it in Italy alone that the disorder prevailed. In England we find the same strength of undisguised passions, the same intemperate will, and the same disregard of decencies. Among the nations of the Continent the English were regarded as peculiarly barbarous. Cellini calls them "questi diavoli—quelle bestie di quegli Inglesi." Erasmus speaks with horror of the clay floors and filthy furniture of our houses. It was thought a service of danger to cross our Channel, and to traverse the roadless wilds of England. But the English then, as now, were

great travellers and imitators of foreign fashions. Young men went abroad, and returned with all the arts, accomplishments, and vices of the Spanish and Italian capitals. Robert Greene, in his travels, describes the adventures which, in Rome or Venice, might befall his countrymen. Ascham severely inveighs against this custom of travelling in Italy, quoting the significant proverb, "Inglese Italianato è un diavolo incarnato," and remarking that "Italy now is not that Italy that it was wont to be." So rapidly were the English growing in the luxuries and vices of other lands, while they retained their native vigour and coarse habits, that the playwrights constantly alluded to the incongruity of fashions displayed in the dress of dandies, to their language mixed of all the dialects in Europe, to their aptitude for every kind of dissipation, to their skill in the sports of all nations, and to the decay of antique severity. "We have robbed Greece of gluttony," says Stephen Gosson, "Spain of pride, France of deceit, and Dutchland of quaffing." But these affectations were only a kind of varnish on the surface of society. The incidents of court gossip show how savage was the life beneath. Queen Elizabeth spat one day, in the midst of her nobles, at a gentleman who had displeased her. She struck Lord Essex on the cheek. Burleigh often cried at her ill-treatment. The lords wrangled and even drew swords in her presence. Once Leicester took her handkerchief from her lap to wipe his face at tennis. Lady Jane Grey was starved and beaten by her parents, and exposed to such indignities that she wearied of life; yet they made her one of the best Greek scholars of the day. Heretics were burned in every town. Sir Henry Sidney, as we learn from a paper recently published by Mr. Froude, when sent to quell the Irish rebels, first proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty and then allowed no mercy to the recusants. He "put man, woman, and child to the sword," while his sergeant-majors balanced the advantages of pillaging, or "having some killing," with a preference for the latter when they felt themselves in humour for the chase. The belief in witches everywhere prevailed, nor was it an uncommon village sport to drown old women in the ponds, and to rack suspected wizards till for very anguish they confessed fictitious crimes. Country-folk conducted their revels with a licence that would shock our modern ears. The Lord of Misrule led out his motley train, and ladies went a-maying with their lovers to the woods. The Feasts of Asses and of Fools profaned the sanctuaries; nor were the sports of Christmas so well suited to celebrate a Christian festival as to recall the rites of Woden and of Freya. Men and women who read Plato, and discussed the beauties of Petrarch's poetry, allowed the coarsest practical jokes and used the grossest language. They sold farms and forests, and wore their acres in the form of gems and gold lace on their backs. But their splendid clothes and jewels did not prevent them from indulging in the most untidy habits. They would lie upon the rushes which concealed the fragments of old feasts; and they burned perfumes to sweeten chambers musty with bad air. The church itself was not

respected. The nave of old St. Paul's became a rendezvous of thieves and prostitutes. Fine gentlemen paid sums of money for the privilege of clanking up and down its aisles in service time; dancers and masquers, crowding from the square outside in all their finery, often took the sacrament and then ran out to recommence their sports. Men were Papists and Protestants according to the time of day; hearing mass in the morning and sermon in the afternoon. There was no end to the extravagance and incongruity of elements which then prevailed in England. Yet in the midst of this confusion rose cavaliers like Sidney, philosophers like Bacon, poets like Spenser; in whom all that is pure, elevated, subtle, tender, strong, wise, delicate, and learned in our modern civilization displayed itself.

Such was the society of which our theatre became the mirror. The splendour and refinement of the life which it imagined, when contrasted with the semi-barbarism from which the world was just emerging, added a strange charm to dramatic entertainments, and raised the fancy of the playwrights to the highest pitch. This contrast converted art into a gorgeous dream, a magnificent possibility, an ardent anticipation of what might be. The artists themselves were Prosperos. In the dark and unpaved streets of London visions came to them of Florence and Verona, bright with palaces and lucid with perpetual sunlight. The energetic passions which they found in their own breasts and everywhere among the men around them, reached a tragic grandeur in their imaginations. They translated the crude violence and fanciful eccentricities of the day into eternal language, and in their poems left to us the types of human nature.

Some critics have complained that our drama lacks the unity and statuesque beauty of the Greek. The French, involved in classical traditions, and those of our own nation who adopt their canons, are bitter on this point. Nor did the English stage assume its form without strong opposition from admirers of antique models. But it must be remembered that between the age of the Athenian drama and the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a period of history had rolled away embracing the development of Greek philosophy, the rise and fall of Rome, the birth and progress of Christianity, the formation and decay of feudalism, the suspension of all knowledge in the middle age, the growth of modern nationalities and modern tongues, the spread of Gothic art and of romantic poetry, and, last of all, the revolution which shook the Papacy and freed the minds of men. This in itself explains the difference which must subsist between the two theatres if both are genuine productions of their age. Therefore, though scholars at the University and purists of the court of Elizabeth wrote dramas in the style of Euripides, reb handling the old themes of Jocasta, Thyestes, Oedipus, and Agamemnon; though Sidney upheld the Aristotelian unities in his defence of poetry; though Heywood, Nevyle, Studley, and the Queen herself translated plays of Seneca, while Lylly and Sackville manufactured tame tragedies with due regard to time and place; though Ben Jonson threw his weight of learning

and personal influence into the scale, and dished up Tacitus and Sallust in blank verse—yet all was vain. The people rejected their lifeless lucubrations; and the people were too strong for university and court. They felt that the genius of modern times could not assume those ancient garments. The new wine refused to be poured into old bottles. England happily was far off from the centre of the classical revival. Our language was composed of many elements, and owed its vigour to a Saxon rather than to a Latin ancestry. Nor did our climate, soil, and history recall those classic memories which proved the ruin of more southern art. Their remains of ancient temples, their soft dialect, in tone and genius allied to that of Rome, their names suggesting a descent from Latin forefathers, made Spaniards and Italians copy the antique. But the force and vigour of the English intellect were native. All the materials which our poets borrowed passed through the furnace of their own imagination, and received the mould of their invention. In no sense can they be accused of plagiarism, though they made free use of all that had been written in verse and prose before their day. From the Renaissance they derived, not its classical affectation, but its deep colouring, its indifference to rule and precedent, its boundless hope, the pomp and pride and passion of its glowing youth. Italy supplied them with tales of love and dreams of beauty, and the names of Venice and Amalfi and Verona. In Spain they found dark traditions of murders, and treasons, and vengeance, of ecclesiastical oppression and ancestral crime. The classics taught them to admire the deeds and lives of citizens and warriors, and filled their fancy with old mythic fables. From the annals of the North and their own land they drew such legends as became the plays of *Lear*, *Edward the Second*, and *Hamlet*. Nor did these subjects, in their incongruous variety, confuse the minds which they enriched. Our dramatists inspired with vital energy each character of myth or history. Of anachronisms and of credulity we may find good store upon their pages. Criticism had not yet begun its reign. Legend had not been separated from fact. They felt the reality of life exceedingly, and grasped all forms through which they could express their knowledge of themselves and of the world. The fantastic circumstances through which they made their men and women move only served to enhance the pleasure they derived from their creative faculty.

But it must not be thought that our dramatists wholly neglected the incidents of English life for these exciting themes. Not only did the humours and fashions of the day supply Marston, Webster, Jonson, Massinger, and Decker with the materials of their comedies, but also in the higher sphere of tragedy they founded some of their best plays upon domestic incidents. None of these surpasses Heywood's *Woman killed with Kindness*. In this tragedy a wife proves unfaithful to her husband, who punishes her by seclusion from his presence. Its pathos depends upon the simple narrative of his sorrow and forbearance, and of her repentant misery and death. The lives of English heroes, dear to

the people—sea captains and buccaneers, like the Spencers and Stukeleys of the West—supplied the playwrights with patriotic melodramas of another kind. Frequently they represented events of transitory and local interest upon the stage. One of the earliest of our tragedies, *Arden of Feversham*, the authorship of which remains unknown, is nothing but the dramatized account of a murder which filled Kent with horror. So again we have the title of a play, now lost, written by Ford and Webster, on *A late Murther of a Son upon a Mother*. In those days a story fell as naturally into the form of a drama as in ours it assumes that of a novel ; and the common people in the pit enjoyed the ghastly details of a murder with even more gusto than our servants do when reading the Sunday papers. Middleton and Rowley made witchcraft the theme of wild and gloomy tragedies, revealing to a later age the dread and loathing with which mediæval fancy contemplated this commerce with the other world, the foul thoughts it suggested, and the brutal superstition it engendered.

Yet in whatever scenes they fixed the action of their plays, we find the same exuberance of life and the same vehement passions. In their delineation of character there is no feebleness of execution. In their plots we trace no lack of incidents, and no languor of development. Their art suffered rather from rapidity, excess of vigour, and extravagant invention To represent exciting scenes by energetic action, to clothe audacious ideas in grandiloquent language, to imitate the broader aspects of passion, to quicken the dullest apprehension by strong contrasts and "sensational" effects, was the aim which authors and actors pursued in common. Hence their designs appear often almost puerile in their simplicity. The devices by which heroic characters, like that of Othello, are entrapped seem to us too palpable. Nor can we admire the abrupt transitions from good to bad, and from vice to virtue, which they frequently exhibit. It must, however, be remembered, as some justification of their art, that passion was far more vehement, and that conversions were more frequent, in those days than they are in ours; and also that the exigencies of the stage required them to condense the work of years into a few short scenes, and for tragic effect to omit those gradations of emotion which we always find in life. Bellafront, in a comedy of Decker, is shown to us at first as a bold and beautiful bad woman ; but love alters her whole life, and she becomes a modest and patient lady. Hipolyto, who wrought this change himself, in course of time turns round and tempts the very woman whom his earlier entreaties had preserved from vice. Under both aspects these characters are drawn with admirable skill; they maintain their individuality without the least apparent violence of truth. Nothing is more common in the plays of Massinger and Fletcher than for tyrants suddenly to be softened by the beauty of their intended victims, for love to take the place of implacable revenge or brutal cruelty, and for the most tender strains of chivalrous affection to flow from lips which before had uttered insults, threats, and curses. On the other hand they show us bad men stubborn in their base designs, whom innocence and beauty and eloquence had

no power to charm. Such are the Tarquin of Heywood, and Fletcher's Rollo, who murders an old man before his daughter's eyes, and listens in silence to the anguish of her pleading, and to the tempest of inspired denunciation which she hurls upon him when the deed is done. The Flamineo and Bosola of Webster are villains of a darker dye, men such as only Italy of the sixteenth century could breed, courtiers refined in arts of wickedness; subtle, polite, and finished scholars; brave in war and bold in love; who live a hundred lives of crime, and treachery, and self-indulgence, in a few years; and then, in ill repute and want of money, place themselves at the command of princes to subserve their pleasures and accomplish their revenge. In such men there is no faith, no hope, and no remorse. Some devil seems to have sat for their portraits. They are helpless in the chains of crime; their own ill-deeds binding them to the bad masters whom they serve, and their blunt consciences allowing them to execute with pleasure diabolical designs. The whole action of many tragedies revolves round characters like those we have described, and their incidents are full of bloodshed. Beaumont and Fletcher have twice brought the agonies of death by poison on the stage. Webster exhibits a prince dying by means of a poisoned helmet, and a duchess strangled in her chamber. Ford adds the horrors of incestuous passion to the death-scene of a sister slain by a brother's hand. In Massinger's *Virgin Martyr* we behold a maiden insulted and driven to the stuke. Marston's Antonio stabs an innocent boy who loves him dearly, in order to accomplish his revenge. Hoffmann, in a play without an author, places on his victim's head a crown of red-hot steel. But none of these horrors are equal to those of *Titus Andronicus*, in which we find parricides, and mothers who devour their children's flesh, and a girl whose hands and tongue have been cut off. It is needless to dwell further on these details. The crudity of passion in that age, whether exhibited in brutal and unbridled lust, or in lust, cruelty, and murder, was something which we cannot understand. Its aspect would be too revolting did not these old dramatists invest their tragedies with moral dignity, and relieve the physical abominations they described by poetry the most pathetic, and by sublime representations of moral anguish.

Inanity in their hands became a powerful instrument of moving pity and inspiring dread. There is nothing more solemn than the consciousness of vacillating reason which the Duchess of Malfi displays after she has been confined in prison among lunatics and murderers. Her persecutors seek to drive her into madness. She argues with herself whether she be mad or not.

O that it were possible
 To hold some two days' conference with the dead !
 From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure
 I never shall know here. I'll tell you a miracle :
 I am not mad yet to my cause of sorrow,
 The heavens o'er my head seem made of molten brass,
 The earth of flaming sulphur : yet I am not mad.

I am acquainted with sad misery
 As the tanned galley-slave' is with his oar :
 Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
 And custom makes it easy.

Extravagant passion, the love of love, or the hate of hate, makes men tremble on the verge of insanity. This state of exaltation, in which the whole nature quivers beneath the shock of one overpowering desire, was admirably rendered by the dramatists. Ferdinand, in Webster, kills his sister from excess of jealousy and avarice. But when he sees her corpse, his fancy, set on flame already by the fury of his hate, becomes a kind of hell, which plagues him always with the memory of her calm, pale face, fixed eyes, and tender age. The milder and more pathetic forms of madness, which result from loss, ill-treatment, slighted love, or an overburdened brain, are handled no less skilfully. We all know how Shakespeare has described the distraction of Ophelia, the diseased intellect of Hamlet, and the gradual approaches of insanity in Lear. The settled melancholy of poor Penthea in Ford's *Broken Heart* is not less touching than the sorrows of Ophelia. Nor can we refrain our sympathy from the Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* whom love has crazed, and who goes wandering by the river-shore seeking Palamon and calling on his name. From the description of a madhouse which we find in Decker, it is clear that the Elizabethan playwrights had the sight of the insane constantly before their eyes. In those days, when passions were so violent and when medical skill as yet was immature, madness must have been more common and more terrible than it is now.

Their keen sense of existence made the men of that age look with dread upon the unfamiliar grave, which they invested with terrors of the most various and vivid kind. The other world had for them intense reality. They described it sometimes as a place of solitude, of endless parting,—

With all we can call ours, with all our sweetness,
 With youth, strength, pleasure, people, time, nay reason !
 For in the silent grave no conversation,
 No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
 No careful father's counsel ; nothing's heard,
 Nor nothing is, but all oblivion,
 Dust, and an endless darkness.

At other times they imagined it to be peopled with horrid shapes and fiends that plagued the wicked. " 'Tis full of fearful shadows," says the King in *Thierry and Theodore*. And Claudio, dreaming of the grave, exclaims :—

Ah ! but to die and go we know not whither !
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot !
 This sensible warm motion to become
 A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
 In thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice :
 To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,

Or blown with restless violence about
 The pendent world, or to be worse than worst
 Of those whose lawless and uncertain thoughts
 Imagined howling ! 'Tis too horrible.
 The weariest and most loathed worldly life
 That age, ache, penury, or imprisonment
 Can lay on nature is a Paradise
 To what we fear of death.

In this description the physical torments of a material hell are conceived with terrible reality. Marlowe dwells upon the moral anguish of the damned, and Mephistopheles, when asked by Faustus where hell is, replies:

Why, *this* is hell, nor am I out of it :
 Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
 And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
 In being deprived of everlasting life ?

Nor did the path of death appear less awful than the realm it led to. Webster represents a murderer dying among his enemies. He cries:—

Oh, the way's dark, and horrid ! I cannot see ;
 Shall I have no company ?

They answer :—

Yes, thy sins
 Do run before thee, to fetch fire from hell
 To light thee thither.

With the same terrible energy Vittoria Corombona exclaims :—

My soul, like to a ship in a black storm,
 Is driven, I know not whither.

Yet, though death seemed so terrible, their dauntless courage and strong lives enabled these fierce heroes to defy the grave and glory in destruction.

We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
 Yea, cease to die by dying.

So they speak when the game of life has been played out ; and then, like travellers—

Go to discover countries yet unknown.

In the midst of the energy and splendour of those times men felt the futility and wretchedness of life. Its very vigour made them realize the transient character of their existence. Ask what is life ? They answer—

A tale told by an idiot,
 Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Ask what are men ?

We are merely the stars' tennis balls,
 Struck and banded which way please them.
 To be man
 Is but to be the exercise of cares
 In several shapes, as miseries do grow,
 They alter as men's forms ; but none know how.

So strong was the despair which fell upon them in this youth and spring-time of the world, that Marston cried,—

Can man by no means creep out of himself
And leave the slough of viperous grief behind ?

To dote upon the grave, and spend sad hours in wormy contemplation, seems to bring them some relief amid the anguish of this “life’s disease.” In Cyril Tourneur’s *Revenger’s Tragedy*, a lover addresses the skull of his dead lady thus:—

Does the silk-worm expend her yellow labours
For thee? for thee does she undo herself?

* * * *

Thou mayst lie chaste now! it were fine, methinks,
To have thee seen at revels, forgetful feasts,
And unclean brothels.

These lines suggest the Dance of Death, with which the margin of Queen Elizabeth’s prayer-book was illuminated. This aching sense of the vanity of life and of the world was partly mediæval, and partly it belonged to the Northern origin of our race. Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* appeared in 1621, before some of our dramatic authors were too late to profit by it. In this book may be traced the morbid spirit of involved reflection which had been favoured by the life of the middle ages, which passed like a phantom across the stage of the Renaissance, and which in men like Sir Thomas Browne and Johnson has reappeared at all periods of our literature. Burton, and the author of *Religio Medici*, both claimed the meditative planet Saturn for the star of their nativity. Albert Dürer’s picture of “Melancholia” might stand for a portrait of their genius. She is represented as a woman in the prime of life, girt with keys that unlock the door of mysteries, and crowned with green leaves and flowers to signify her youth and love of nature. Upon her shoulders are wings, strong to carry her beyond the bounds of space. A Cupid sits at her right hand, showing that Love himself is in the train of this imperious lady. A hound lies at her feet, while scattered on the ground are implements of all the arts and sciences, cubes and saws and levers, arithmetical tables, the hour-glass, and the bell, the compass, and the crucible. None of these she heeds, but looks intently forward, resting chin on hand. From her girdle falls a bag of coals. Such is the portrait of Teutonic Melancholy, whose universal strength and insight, love of solitude, and power of thought, intensity of passion and contempt for wealth, hope mixed with fear, and faith obscured by doubt, our dramatists possessed in no small measure. “Nothing’s so dainty sweet as lovely Melancholy,” are the words with which Beaumont concludes the ode in which he speaks of—

Folded arms and fixed eyes,
A sigh, that plumes, mortifies,
A look that’s fix’d on the ground,
A tongue chained up without a sound?

Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
 Places which pale passion loves !
 Moonlight walks where all the fowls
 Are warmly housed, save bats and owls.

Nor did the terrible scenes chosen by the dramatists for their delineation of human passions fail to foster the natural gloominess of their temperament. So many of their characters were hunted by the tyranny of fate, and their own crimes, stretched out upon the rack of suffering or an evil conscience, maddened by agony or disappointed love, that we do not wonder to hear them complaining that "the world's a tedious theatre," or to read such hopeless lines as those of Webster in his celebrated dirge :

Of what is't fools make such vain keeping ?
 Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
 Their life a general mist of error,
 Their death a hideous storm of terror.

But it was not always that they brooded with this morbid horror on the secrets of the other world. Fletcher has some charming passages upon the last slumber of the virtuous. Ordella, in the play of *.Thierry and Theodore*, replies to the gloomy suggestions of the king :—

These fears
 Feeling but once the fires of noble thought
 Fly like the shapes of clouds we form to nothing.

And when he paints the solitude of death, again she answers :—

'Tis of all sleeps the sweetest :
 Children begin it to us, strong men seek it,
 And kings from height of all their painted glory
 Fall like spent exhalations to this centre.

Memnon, in the *Mad Lover's Tragedy*, argues thus about his passion for the beautiful princess :—

I do her wrong, much wrong : she's young and blessed,
 Sweet as the spring, and as his blossoms tender ;
 And I a nipping north wind, my head hung
 With hails and frosty icicles : are the souls so too
 When we depart hence, lame, and old, and loveless ?
 No, sure 'tis ever youth there ; time and death
 Follow our flesh no more ; and that forced opinion
 That spirits have no sexes, I believe not.

Being asked where pure love may hope for its accomplishment, he answers :—

Below, Siphax,
 Below us, in the other world, Elyxium,
 Where's no more dying, no despairing, mourning,
 Where all desires are full, deserts down loaden,
 There, Siphax, there, where loves are ever living.

In the same strain of poetical feeling, Caratach comforts his little nephew Hengo, at the hour of death. The boy asks, "Whither must we go when we are dead ? "

Why, to the blessed'st place, boy ! Ever sweetness
 And happiness dwells there.
 No ill men
 That live by violence and strong oppression
 Come thither. 'Tis for those the gods love—good ones.

Webster, contrasting the death of those who die in peace with that of tyrants and bad livers, makes a prince exclaim :—

O thou soft, natural death, that art joint twin
 To sweetest slumber ! No rough bearded comet
 Stares on thy mild departure ; the dull owl
 Beats not against thy easement ; the hoarse wolf
 Scents not thy carrion ; pity winds thy corse,
 Whilst horror waits on princes.

Decker, too, in his most melodious verse, has said :—

An innocent to die ; what is it less
 But to add angels to heaven's happiness ?

Nor did the bloodshed, madness, and fury of their plots prevent these dramatists from touching all the softest stops of human nature; from showing us the purest love, the most devoted friendship, the clearest faith, and the tenderest devotion. One quotation from old Decker's half-forgotten comedy, *The Honest Whore*, will prove in what rare words they could clothe simple and exquisite thoughts which bring religion home to our own hearts :—

The best of men
 That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer ;
 A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit ;
 The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

With the same power of delicately touching elevated themes, Heywood adds a sanctity of pathos to the speech in which an injured husband forgives his dying wife :—

As freely from the low depths of my soul
 As my Redeemer hath forgiven his death,
 I pardon thee.
 Even as I hope for pardon at that day
 When the great Judge of heaven in scarlet sits,
 So be thou pardoned.

To understand how thoroughly they knew the heart and could unfold its inmost secrets, we need only read their plays at random. It would be impossible to quote from the multitude of their sweet and noble scenes, or we might summon up Fletcher's *Aspasia*, forlorn among her maidens; Heywood's Frankford, pleading with his wife; the Virgin Martyr of Massinger, comforted by her angelic servant; Decker's father concealing his sorrow under a mask of pride when he hears of his unchaste daughter's death; the last discourse of Delio and Antonio, two friends, in Webster's masterpiece; the passionate farewell which Mellida receives from her disguised lover in Marston's tragedy of *Antonio's Revenge*; Tourneur's brother and sister awakening repentance in the heart of their bad mother; Ford's Penthea, wasting away in shame, neglect, and slighted love; the

invocation to Mars, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Noble Kinsmen*; little Hengo's death, in their tragedy of *Bonduca*; the awful soliloquy of Faust at his last moment; or the impassioned oratory of Icilius, in the play of *Appius and Virginia*.

If the evil of the world was painted simply as it is in all its strength and ugliness by our old dramatists, the beauty and the peace, the loveliness of nature and the dignity of soul which make our life worth living, were no less faithfully portrayed. The multiform existence we enjoy upon this earth received a true reflection in our theatre—nor was one aspect of its development neglected for another. Those artists verily believed that “the world's a stage:” they made their art a microcosm of the universe.

Among the ruffians and tyrians whom we have described may be found the most exquisite conceptions of womanly virtue and loveliness. It has been remarked that the very names of Fletcher's ladies have a charm—Aspasia, Ordella, Amoret, Evadne, Viola, Euphrasia, Edith, Oriana; and their characters answer to their names. They are sweet, and true, and noble; never changing in their love or tiring in their tenderness; enduring all things, and believing all things; patient, meek, strong, innocent, unto the end. His *Bonduca* is of another type—an Amazon, a queen, and leader of a British clan in their rebellion against Rome. Such women the old playwrights loved. One might fancy they had gone to Italy, and studied them among the noble ladies of Venice. The insolence and intellectual vigour of Vittoria Corombona, when she stands up to defy her judges and confound them with her beauty, are among the most masterly of Webster's conceptions. Marston's Sophonisba, the Roman bride, who meets death with a dauntless countenance; Massinger's Domitia, the Empress, who woos an actor to her love in words that savour of habitual command; Ford's Annabella, guilty in her passion, but sublime in her endurance of disgrace and death; Marston's Ingrate Countess; the Queen mother, in *Lust's Dominion*; and Decker's Bellafront, are all of the same stamp, strong for good or evil, and of indomitable will. That the same poets could delineate the softer forms of female character is proved by Mellida, by Dorothea, and by Isabel, in whom the tenderness of woman mingles with heroic constancy and strength in suffering. We wonder how such characters could have been adequately represented on the stage, for during the reigns of Elizabeth and James no women acted. Boys were trained to take their parts; and it often happened that the youth who appeared as Duchess of Malfi, or Lady Macbeth, shaved his beard before he placed the coronet and curls upon his head. It is impossible that young men, brought up amid the common scenes of theatrical life, could have understood and faithfully interpreted these high conceptions of the queenly character. Perhaps for them to impersonate Desdemona and Aspasia would have been still more difficult.

In consequence of this custom great coarseness in the treatment of dramatic subjects was allowed. Boys took parts which it is to be

hoped no woman would have dared to play. And much of the obscenity which defiles the comic drama of the time may be attributed to this practice. Yet it is certain that these young artists acquired considerable skill in delineating even the finer shades of character. It was the custom for actors of great repute to take boys as apprentices. Alleyn and Burbage thus educated their pupils in the histrionic art, by first teaching them to play inferior parts, and by gradually advancing them to more important posts. Some of the male characters assigned to them required a delicate perception of the subtlest sentiments. The part of Arthur in *King John* is celebrated for its pathos, and we have already quoted enough from the death-scene of Fletcher's *Hengo* to prove how touching might have been that dialogue between the dying hero of some ten years old and his stern uncle. Often, too, when they appeared as women on the stage, they assumed a male disguise, and carried on a double part with constant innuendoes, hints, and half-betrayals of their simulated sex. The Pages in *Philaster* and *The Lover's Melancholy*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Imogen, and Jonson's *Silent Woman*, are instances of these epicene characters which our ancestors delighted to contemplate. "What an odd double confusion it must have made," says Charles Lamb, "to see a boy play a woman playing a man: we cannot disentangle the perplexity without some violence to the imagination."

So powerful was the influence of these romantic metamorphoses upon the fancy of ladies at the time, that some distressed damsels seem to have entertained the notion of following their lovers, actually as pages, to the wars. The daughter of Sir George Moore resolved to accompany the poet Donne in his travels under this disguise. He dissuaded her from the attempt in verses of exquisite feeling and propriety:—

Dissemble nothing, not a boy, nor change
Thy body's habit, nor mind; be not strange
To thyself only. All will spy in thy face
A blushing, womanly, discovering grace.

After picturing the dangers she might run upon the seas and in foreign lands, he adds.—

For thee
England is only a worthy gallery
To walk in expectation, till from thence
Our greatest King call thee to his presence.
When I am gone, dream me some happiness;
Nor let thy looks our long-hid love confess.

From Walton's *Lives*, we learn that this love, so powerful on her side as to make her willing to unsex herself, so pure and noble and respectful on the poet's as to induce him to refuse this sacrifice, proved most unfortunate.

Modern Falconry.

HUNTING and hawking were, as every one knows, the great sports of our forefathers. Angling was but little understood before the time of Walton and Cotton, and not thoroughly even by those great masters themselves. In the olden time, the bow and arrow, being scarcely adapted for fowling, were used almost exclusively against large game, such as deer ; the crossbow was perhaps not a very efficient weapon ; and the art of shooting flying with a fowling-piece may be said to be of recent invention. It is true that, a couple of hundred years ago, men (the sportsmen of those days) might have been seen, armed with a matchlock, or some such wonderful contrivance, crawling towards a covey of basking partridges, with the intention of shooting them on the ground ; and Dame Juliana Berners, who wrote upon falconry in the middle of the fifteenth century, invented a fly-rod of such excessive weight that the strongest salmon-fisher in these days would be unwilling to wield it. But this was sorry work, and we can well understand that, of itself, it was very far from satisfying a sport-loving people. They still held by the old sports. Hunting and hawking were in their glory when what we now call "shooting" and "fishing" were scarcely understood at all. Deer were in abundance, and so was other game, especially if we consider the few people privileged to kill it. In those days, though not in these, the most sportsmanlike way was the most profitable ; and more quarry could be taken with dogs and hawks than in any other, and perhaps less legitimate, manner.

Hunting we retain, as our great and national sport, though circumstances, rather than choice, have led to our exchanging the stag for the fox. But falconry, the great sport of chivalry, once the national sport of these islands, has been permitted so nearly to die out that but few people are aware of its existence amongst us. That it does still live, however, though under a cloud,—to what extent and in what manner it is carried out,—it is the purport of this paper to show.

The causes of the decrease, and almost the loss, of this sport are obvious enough. Amongst the chief are, the present enclosed state of the country ; the perfection—or what is almost perfection—of modern gunnery, and of the marksman's skill, and the desire to make large bags. Add to these, perhaps, the trouble and expense attendant upon keeping hawks. But the links have at no time absolutely been broken which, in England, unite falconry in the time of Ethelbert to falconry of the present day. Lord Orford and Colonel Thornton took them up and strengthened them at the end of the last, and the beginning of the present, century. Later

still, the Loo Club in Holland saved falconry from extinction in England, because its English members brought their falcons to this country, and flew them here. The Barrs, first-rate Scotch falconers, and John Pells, of Norfolk, helped the course by training and selling hawks ; and a work entitled *Falconry in the British Isles*, published in 1855, together with some chapters which appeared rather later in one of the leading sporting newspapers (and were afterwards collected in a volume), served to create or encourage a love for falconry.

It was said that the present Duke of St. Albans, the Grand Falconer, would take to the sport *con amore*, and not as a mere form ; but this is very far indeed from being the case. The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh was perhaps the most considerable falconer of the present day ; and last season but one he killed 119 grouse with his young hawks ; but he has lately given up the greater part of his hawking establishment. In Ireland there are some good falcons, flown occasionally at herons, and frequently, and with great success, at other quarry ; many officers in the army are falconers ; and, in the wilds of Cheshire, there lives a poor gentleman who has flown hawks for fifteen years, and contrives, through the courtesy of his friends, to make a bag on the moors with his famous grouse-hawk "The Princess," and one or two others.

Those who have been accustomed to regard falconry as entirely a thing of the past, and the secret of hawk-training as utterly lost as that of Stonehenge or the Pyramids, will be surprised to hear that there are, at the present time, hawks in England of such proved excellence, that it is impossible to conceive even princes in the olden time, notwithstanding the monstrous prices they are said to have paid for some falcons, ever possessing better. When a peregrine falcon will "wait on," as it is called, at the height of a hundred, or a hundred and fifty yards above her master, as he beats the moors for her, and, when the birds rise, chase them with almost the speed of an arrow ; when she is sure to kill, unless the grouse escapes in cover ; when she will not attempt to "carry" her game, even should a dog run by her, and when she is ready to fly two or three times in one morning ; it can easily be imagined, even by those who know nothing of falconry, that she has reached excellence.

And so, in heron-hawking. If a cast of falcons, unhooded at a quarter of a mile from a passing heron (especially a "light" heron, i. e. a heron going to feed, and therefore not weighted), capture him in a wind, and after a two-mile flight, it is difficult to suppose, *ceteris paribus*, that any hawks could possibly be superior to them. And, as such hawks as we have described exist, the inevitable conclusion is, that where falconry is really understood, it is understood as well as it ever was ; or, in other words, that modern falconry, as far as the perfection of individual hawks is concerned, is equal to ancient.

Our forefathers, excellent falconers as they were, chose to make a wonderful mystery of their craft ; and when they did publish a book on the subject of their great sport, its directions could only avail the gravity

of those exclusive times. In examining these books, one is sometimes almost tempted to doubt whether the writers really offered the whole of their contents in a spirit of good faith; at any rate, some of the advice is very startling to modern ears; and no sane man of the present day would dream of following it. Perhaps the reader would like an extract. Here, then, is a recipe for a sick hawk, extracted from *The Gentleman's Recreation*, published 1677. "Take germander, pelamountain, basil, grummel-seed, and broom-flowers, of each half an ounce; hyssop, sassafras, poly-podium, and horse-mints, of each a quarter of an ounce, and the like of nutmegs; cubeb, borage, mummy, mugwort, sage, and the four kinds of mirobolans, of each half an ounce; of aloes soccotrine the fifth part of an ounce, and of saffron one whole ounce. To be put into a hen's gut, tied at both ends." What was supposed to be the effect of this marvellous mixture, it is somewhat hard to divine; but our modern pharma-coepia would be content with a little rhubarb, and a few peppercorns. With regard to food, we are told, in the same work, that cock's flesh is proper for falcons that are "melancholick;" and that "phlegmatick" birds are to be treated in a different way,—possibly fed on pullets. Were this paper intended as a notice of ancient, instead of modern falconry, we might multiply instances to show the extreme *faddiness* of the old falconers.

Simply to *tame* a hawk is excessively easy. To train it, up to a certain point, is not at all difficult. But it requires an old and practised hand to produce a bird of first-rate excellence.

The modern routine of training the peregrine falcon is shortly as follows:—Young birds are procured, generally from Scotland, either just before they can fly, or just after. They are placed in some straw, on a platform, in an outhouse, which ought to open to the south-east. They are furnished each with a large bell (the size of a very small walnut) for the leg; and each with a couple of jessies (short straps of leather) for both legs. If they are unable to fly, the door of the coach-house (or whatever the outhouse may be) should be left open; but if they have tolerable use of their wings, it will be necessary to close it for the first few days. They are fed twice a day with beefsteak—changed, occasionally, for rabbit, rook, or pigeon; and, if the birds are very young, the food must be cut up small; but it is improper to take them from the nest until the feathers have shown themselves thoroughly through the white down. A lure is then used. This instrument need be nothing more than a forked and somewhat heavy piece of wood (sometimes covered with leather), to which is fastened a strap and a couple of pigeons' wings. To this meat is tied; and the young hawks are encouraged to fly down from their platform, at the stated feeding times, to take their meals from it, the falconer either loudly whistling or shouting to them the while. Presently, and as they become acquainted with the lures, they are permitted to fly at large for a fortnight or three weeks; and, if the feeding-times be kept, the lures well furnished with food, and the shout or whistle employed,

the hawks will certainly return when they are due ; unless, indeed, they have been injured or destroyed when from home, by accident or malice. This flying at liberty is termed "flying at hack." When the young hawks show any disposition to prey for themselves (though the heavy bells are intended slightly to delay this), they are taken up from "hack," either with a small net, or with the hand. They are then taught to wear the hood, and are carried on the fist. In a few days they are sufficiently tame to be trusted at large, and may be flown at young grouse or pigeons, the heavy bells having been changed for the lightest procurable. At this period great pains are taken by the falconer to prevent his bird "carrying" her game ; for it is obvious that, were the hawk to move when he approached her, he would be subject constantly to the greatest trouble and disappointment. The tales told in books about hawks *bringing* quarry to their master are absurd ; the falconer must go to his hawk. Such is a sketch of the training in modern times of the eyas or young bird. Wild-caught hawks, however, called "haggards," are occasionally used. These, though excellent for herons and rooks, are not good for game-hawking, as it is difficult to make them "wait on" about the falconer, and all game must be flown from the air, and not from the hood ; i.e. by a hawk from her pitch, and not from the fist of her master. Haggards, of course, are never flown at "hack." The tiercel, or male peregrine, is excellent for partridges and pigeons ; but the female bird only can have a chance with herons, and is to be preferred also for grouse and rooks.

We have in this country several trained goshawks, which are flown at rabbits ; also sometimes at hares and pheasants. The merlin, too, is occasionally trained : the present writer flew these beautiful little birds at larks for years ; but gave them up in 1857, and confined himself entirely to peregrines and goshawks. The sparrowhawk, the wildest of hawks, is sometimes used for small birds. The hobby is hardly to be procured. The Iceland and Greenland falcons are prized, but are rarely met with.

These large birds are called gersfalcons ; and, when very white, and good in the field, fetched extravagant prices in the old times. They may now sometimes be procured untrained for 5*l.* or 6*l.* each ; but the peregrine is large enough for the game of this country.

It may be interesting to know, in something like detail, what a flight at game, rooks, pigeons, or magpies is like ; how it is conducted, and to what extent the sagacity of hawks may be developed. To this end, we will give a sketch or two of what is being done now, and what will be done in the game season.

At this season of the year, and in this country, falconers are obliged to be content with rook, pigeon, or magpie flying. Such quarry is flown "out of the hood," and not from the air ; i.e., the hawk, instead of "waiting on" over the falconer in expectation of quarry being sprung, is unhooded as it rises, and is cast off from the fist. At least the only exception to this is when pigeons are thrown from the hand in order to teach a hawk to "wait on."

It will be understood that, in the following description, the peregrine is supposed to be used, for a long-winged hawk is necessary for the flights about to be described, and the merlin is too small to be depended upon for anything larger than a blackbird, or a young partridge ; though the best females are good for pigeons.

Let us go out to-day, then, and try to kill a rook or two on the neighbouring common. The hawks are in good condition ; not indeed as fat as though they were put up to moult, but with plenty of flesh and muscle, and wind kept good by almost daily exercise. We have a haggard tiercel and a haggard falcon ; also two eyas falcons ; all are up to their work, and have been well entered to rooks. We shall not trouble ourselves to take out the cadge to-day, for our party is quite strong enough to carry the hawks on the fist. Only two of us are mounted, a lady and a gentleman ; the rest will run. The lady would carry the little tiercel, but she is afraid lest she should make a blunder in unhooding him, as her mare is rather fresh this morning ; but her companion, who has flown many a hawk, willingly takes charge of him.

We are well on the common now ; and lo ! a black mass on the ground there, with a few black spots floating over. Hark to the distant "caw !" A clerical meeting. "Let us give them a bishop, then," says the bearer of the tiercel, which is called by that name. The wind is from them to us. The horseman and his companion canter onwards ; we follow at a slow run. The horses approach the flock ; the black mass becomes disturbed and rises ; the "bishop" is thrown off with a shout of "Hoo, ha ! ha !" and rushes amongst his clergy with even more than episcopal energy. There is full enough wind ; the rooks are soon into it, and ringing up in a compact body with a pace which, for them, is very good. His lordship, too, is mounting : he rose in a straight line the moment he left the fist, but he is now making a large circle to get above his quarry. He has reached them, but he does not grapple with the first bird he comes near, though he seems exceedingly close to it. But there is something so thoroughly systematic in his movements, something which so suggests a long and deadly experience, that even the uninitiated of the party feel certain that he is doing the right thing. He is nearly above them. A rook has left the flock—the very worst thing he could possibly do for his own sake : he has saved the bishop the trouble of selection. He makes for some trees in the distance, but it is inconceivable that he can reach them. There ! and there ! Now again ! He is clutched at the third stoop, and both birds, in a deadly embrace, flap and twist to the ground together. The rest are high in the air, and a long way off.

It must not be considered that this tiercel did not dash at once into the whole flock because he was afraid to do so. He had no fear whatever ; but nature or experience taught him that a stoop from above was worth half-a-dozen attempts to fly level and grapple.

"It's poor work after all," said one of the party, who had run for it notwithstanding ; "there brutes can't fly, and it's almost an insult to a

first-rate hawk to unhood him at such quarry. Even the hawks don't fly with the same dash that one sees when a strong pigeon is on the wing. Besides, it's spoiling the eyases for game-hawking ; when they ought to be ' waiting on ' over grouse, they will be starting after the first rook that passes."

" My good fellow," answered another, " you *must* hawk rooks now, or be content with pigeons, unless you can find magpies (we will try that presently) : there are no herons anywhere near (and I don't know that the eyases would fly them if there were) ; and, as for flying a house-pigeon, which has been brought to the field in a basket, though I grant the goodness of the flight, I don't see the sport. If we could find wood-pigeons far enough from trees, I should like that. As for the game next season, there are not many rooks on the *moors* ; and, as these falcons would fly rooks even if they had not seen them for a year, I don't think we are losing much by what we are doing. It is exercise at any rate; and, besides, I assure you that I have seen an old cock-rook, in a wind like this, live for a mile, before one of the best falcons in the world, where there was not a single tree to shelter him."

We are compelled to go some distance before we can see a black feather ; for rooks, once frightened, are very careful ; or rather, we should have been so compelled had it not happened that an old carrion-crow, perhaps led near the spot by curiosity, is seen passing at the distance of about two hundred yards. The passage-falcon is instantly unhooded and cast off ; and, as we are now in the neighbourhood of a few scattered trees, it takes ten minutes to kill him ; and a short time too, for he has " treed " himself *some* eight or ten times in spite of our efforts to make him take the open.

Our time is short to-day ; but let us get a magpie, if possible, before we go home. Our fair companion is fully as anxious for the sport as we are. Only a mile off there is a nice country ; large grass fields, small fences, with a bush here and there. We have reached it. A magpie has flown from the top of that single tree in the hedgerow, and is skimming down the field. Off with the young falcons : wait till the first sees him ; now unhood the second. Ah ! he sees *them*, and flies along the side of the hedge. Let us ride and run ! Get him out of cover as fast as possible, while the hawks " wait on " above. Pray, sir, jump the fence a little lower down, and help to get him out from the other side. Hoo-ha-ha ! there he goes. Well stooped, " Vengeance," and nearly clutched, " Guinevere," but he has reached the tree in the hedgerow, and is moving his long tail about in the most absurd manner. A good smack of the whip, and he is off again. And so we go on for a quarter of an hour, riding, running, shouting, till " Guinevere" clutches him just as he is about to enter a clump of trees. Who-whoop !

Such is rook-hawking and magpie-hawking. In an open plain, and on a tolerably still day, a great number of rooks may be killed with good hawks. Either eyas or passage-falcons may be used. Last year, one

hundred and fifty-two rooks and two carrion-crows were killed by some officers, on the finest place for rook-flying in England, with some passage-hawks and two eyases. In 1863, ninety rooks were killed, near the same spot, with eyases. Tercels are better than falcons for magpie-hawking, as they are unquestionably quicker amongst hedgerows, and can turn in a smaller compass. One tiercel has been known to kill eight magpies in a day ! but this is extraordinary work.

To prevent confusion, it may be as well to mention here that the term "haggard" and "passage-hawk," both mean a wild-caught hawk ; while "eyas" signifies a bird taken from the nest or eyrie.

Heron-hawking requires an open country, with a heronry in the neighbourhood. The quarry is flown at generally by passage-hawks ; but a few very good eyases have been found equal to the flight.

Game-hawking is conducted in the following manner :—Let us suppose, in the first instance, that the falconer is living in the immediate neighbourhood of grouse-moors, and that he wishes, on some fine morning at the end of October or the beginning of November, to show his friend a flight or two at grouse, without going very far for the sport. The old pointer is summoned ; "The Princess," an eyas falcon in the second plumage, is hooded ; and the walk is commenced.

Now, very early in the season on the moors, and through the whole of September with partridges, it is better to wait for a point before the hawk is cast off, for this saves time, and you know that you have game under you ; but at that period of the season which we have named, grouse rise the moment man or dog is seen, and you would have a bad chance indeed were you to fly your hawk out of the hood (*i.e.* from the fist) at them. The best way is to keep your dog to heel, not to talk, and, just before you show yourself in some likely place, to throw up the falcon. When she has reached her pitch, which she will soon do, hurry the dog on, run, clap your hands, and get the birds up as soon as may be.

The hill is ascended, "The Princess" is at her pitch—where she would remain, following her master and "Shot," the pointer, for ten minutes if necessary. Some minutes pass : an old cock-grouse, put up by a shepherd-dog, rises a couple of hundred yards off. Hoo-ha-ha-ha ! "The Princess" vanishes from her post, more rapidly than the knights in *Tranhoe* left theirs. She does not droop or fly near the ground (she has had too much experience for that), but almost rises as she shoots off after him. Had he risen under her, she would have cut him over ; but this is a different affair. They are soon out of sight down the hill ; but a marker has been placed that way. "I think she has killed him, sir," he shouts presently ; "but it's a long way. No, she's coming back ; she must have put him into cover." Up and down hill, it would take us twenty minutes to get there ; and see ! she is over our heads, "waiting on" again, and telling us, as well as she can, to spring another. A point ! how is that ?—only that there are some more which dare not rise because they have seen her. "Hi in, 'Shot !'" Again the falconer's shout startles his

friend ; again "The Princess" passes through the air like an arrow. "All right this time, sir," cries the marker ; "I see her with it under yon wall." She has scarcely begun to eat the head as we reach her. One more flight. She is listed on the grouse ; the leash is passed through the jesses, and then she is hooded. Let us rest for ten minutes. Again, she is "waiting on," again she flies ; but this time, though we see the flight for three-quarters of a mile, the birds top a hill, and we are an hour in finding them. The grouse, however, is fit for cooking even then ; only the head, neck, and some of the back have vanished : it is plucked nearly as well as though it had been in the hands of a cook. That will do, and very good sport, too, considering we had but one hawk. Let us now furl her up on beef, and hood her.

In the very early part of the season, with grouse, and commonly with partridges, it is usual (as we have hinted) to wait for a point ; the hawk is then cast off, and the birds are sprung when she has reached her pitch.

Goshawks, which may be occasionally procured from the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, or directly from Sweden or Germany, are considered by some falconers to be difficult birds to manage. That they are sulkily disposed is certain ; but in hands *accustomed to them*, and when they are constantly at work, they are exceedingly trustworthy, even affectionate, and will take as many as eight or ten rabbits in a day. They are short-winged hawks, and have no chance with anything faster than a rising pheasant ; they are excellent for rabbits, and a few hares ones will sometimes hold a hare. In modern practice they are never hooded, except in travelling, and are always flown from the fist, or from some tree in which they may have perched after an unsuccessful flight.

There are probably, in these islands, about fifteen practical falconers, three or four of whom are professional ; of the latter, John Pells and Mr. Barrs are well worthy of mention.

John Pells was born at Lowestoft in 1815, and went, when he was thirteen, with his father to Valkneswaard to take passage-hawks for the Didlington Subscription Club ; so that he was very soon in harness. The elder Pells commenced his career at the age of eleven, and was in every respect a perfect falconer ; he was presented by Napoleon I. with a falcon's bag, which is now in possession of the Duke of Leeds. He died in 1847. The present John Pells has had all possible advantages in his calling, and has made every use of them. He was falconer to the Duke of Leeds, to Mr. O'Keeffe, to Mr. E. C. Newcome, to the late Duke of St. Albans, and now attends to the hawks which the present duke is bound, either by etiquette or necessity, to maintain. Pells also sells trained hawks, and gives lessons in the art of falconry. He was at one time an exceedingly active man, and spent six months in Iceland, catching Iceland falcons. After enduring a good deal of cold and fatigue, he brought fifteen of these birds to Brandon, in Norfolk, in November 1845. He is now too stout and too gouty for strong exercise, but his experience is very valuable.

Too much can hardly be said in praise of John and Robert Barr (brothers). Their father, a gamekeeper in Scotland, taught them, in a rough way, the rudiments of falconry. They are now, and have been for a long time, most accomplished falconers. When in the employment of the Indian Prince Dhuleep Singh, John Barr was sent to India to learn the Indian system of falconry. There is some notion now of his being placed at the head of a hawking club about to be established in Paris; and English falconry might well be proud of such a representative. Besides the Pells and the Barrs, we have Paul Möllen, Gibbs, and Bots, —and one or two more—all good.

In consequence of the great rage for game-preserving which obtains in the present day, it does not seem unlikely that the peregrine falcon may, in time, be as thoroughly exterminated in Scotland and Ireland as the goshawk has already been. At present, however, falconers find no difficulty in procuring these birds, if they are willing to pay for them. In a selfish point of view, therefore, they have nothing of which to complain. But it might become a question, at least of conscience, whether mankind have the right, though they possibly may have the power, of blotting out from the face of creation—so long as there is no danger to human life and limb—any conspicuous type of strength or of beauty. The kingfisher is sought to be exterminated on our rivers, the eagle and the falcon on our hills; and it is brought forward in justification of this slaughter—at least it is brought forward in effect—that the sportsman's bag and the angler's creel are of much more importance than the wonderful works of God. To all that is selfish in these strict preservers of fish and of game it may be opposed that part of the food of the kingfisher consists in minnows; that the fry of trout and salmon, when not confined in breeding-boxes, are rarely procured by this bird, which constantly feeds upon the larvæ of the *Hyliscæ* and *Libellula*, the real foes of the fly; that the peregrine fawn, though she undoubtedly kills very many healthy grouse, purges the moors of diseased ones, and drives away the egg-stealing birds. And to all that is generous in these martinetts of preservation it may be submitted that true sport has other elements than those of acquisition and slaughter; that the pleasure of a ramble on the hills or by the river is really dashed if you have struck out some of the beauty of the landscape; and that the incident of a flight made by a wild hawk, or the flash of a kingfisher near the angler's rod, is as lively and as well worth relating as the fall of an extra grouse to the gun, or the addition of another trout to the basket.

The Syrian Flute.

IT was a Syrian afternoon
In April, sweet as English June,
And fast and free our company
Rode o'er the steaming Huleh* plain,
And underneath the ancient tree
On the first Eastern slope, drew rein :
Swarthy English faces two or three,
Among black brows of Araby ;
With some remains of white and red
On Yorkshire damsels, burnt nut-brown.
So where our scanty meal was spread,
By the broad oak we lighted down ;
And girths were slack'd and bits withdrawn,
And, haltered on the narrow lawn,
Full fain the horses grazed awhile.
Our feet were deep in flowers alway ;
The thick bees revell'd on the may,
Singing their songs of summer-day
Upon the blooms of the old Isle.

Ah me, the noonday hour of ease,
Hour best beloved of beasts and men !
How daintily the southern breeze
Caress'd us ever and again ;
While here and there a bird did seem
To sleep, and twitter, all in dream ;
And still the hallow'd new-born stream
Spake gently now and then.

* * * * *

Who may forget the earliest sight
Of Jordan breaking forth to light ?
How he wells forth, strong and tender,
With a joyous inner sound ;
No foam-threaded streamlet slender,
But all limpid and profound.
How his fig-trees, gnarled and olden,
Cast abroad their fan-like wood,
Thrusting off the sere leaves golden
With the emerald-bursting bud,

* Upper plain of Jordan about the "Waters of Merom."

How his aged willows hoary
 Wave and whiten night and morn ;
 How his oleanders' glory
 Like rose-fringes of the morn,
 Glow with delicate carnation
 Round each wayward-wandering bay,
 Drinking deep in emulation,
 With the myrtle and the may,
 And the lilies and the deer,
 And the spiry reed, that bare
 On Earth's most awful day,
 As the dread Dark began to fall,
 The sponge of vinegar and gall,—
 Man's scornful pity, last and worst,
 Up to the Lips which said, "I thirst"—
 So runs the careless stream away.

* * * * *

A quaint and tender little sound
 Came softly on my pilgrim's dream
 'Twas sigh and murmur all around,
 So that strange note did seem
 Just louder than the stream and breeze :
 It had a buzzing tuneful tone,
 As if the Grandsire of all Bees
 Did there disport and take his ease,
 Making a small contented moan.
 • I look'd—and there upon a stone,
 Like David or like Corydon,
 And most of all like sylvan Pan,
 There sat a wild and shaggy man
 Who play'd the Syrian reed :
 The double flute his pastoral peers
 Had bade discourse through all the years
 Since Israel piped with pipes, to bring
 His exiled Shepherd mourning home;
 Since Western herdsmen rose to sing
 Unto the reed of Greece or Rome ;
 Since Arcady, since Sicily,
 Since ilex, beech, and chestnut-tree
 Saw Shepherd's life, heard shepherd's lay.
 That which hath been, the same shall be.
 Old Jordan runs on ceaselessly,
 And man accomplisheth his day.

Heroines and their Grandmothers.

WHY do women now-a-days write such melancholy novels ? Are authoresses more miserable than they used to be a hundred years ago ? Miss Austen's heroines came tripping into the room, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, arch, and good-humoured. Evelina and Cecilia would have thoroughly enjoyed their visits to the opera, and their expeditions to the masquerades, if it had not been for their vulgar relations. Valancourt's Emily was a little upset, to be sure, when she found herself all alone in the ghostly and mouldy castle in the south of France, but she, too, was naturally a lively girl, and on the whole showed a great deal of courage and presence of mind. Miss Edgeworth's heroines were pleasant and easily pleased, and to these may be added a blooming rose-garden of wild Irish girls, of good-humoured and cheerful young ladies, who consented to make the devoted young hero happy at the end of the third volume, without any very intricate self-examinations, and who certainly were much more appreciated by the heroes of those days, than our modern heroines with all their workings and deep feelings and unrequited affections are now, by the noblemen and gentlemen to whom they happen to be attached.

If one could imagine the ladies of whom we have been speaking come to life again, and witnessing all the vagaries and agonizing experiences and deadly calm and irrepressible emotion of their granddaughters, the heroines of the present day, what a bewildering scene it would be ! Evelina and Cecilia ought to faint with horror ! Madame D'Urvil's most shocked expressions were never so alarming as the remarks they might now hear on all sides. Elizabeth Bennett would certainly burst out laughing, Emma might lose her temper, and Fanny Price would turn scarlet and stop her little ears. Perhaps Emily of Udolpho, more accustomed than the others to the horrors of sensation, and having once faced those long and terrible passages, might be able to hold her own against such a great-granddaughter as Aurora Floyd or Lady Audley. But how would she do with the soul-workings and heart troubles of Miss Kavanagh's Adèle, or our old favourite Ethel May in the *Dairy Chain*, or Cousin Phyllis, or Margaret Hale, or Jane Eyre, or Lucy Snowe, or Dinah or Maggie Tulliver's distractions, or poor noble Ronola's perplexities ? Emily would probably prefer any amount of tortuous mysteries, winding staircases and passages, or groans and groans, and yards and yards of faded curtains, to the task of mastering these modern intricacies of feeling and doubting and sentiment.

Are the former heroines women as they were, or as they were supposed to be in those days ? Are the women of whom women write now, women as they are, or women as they are supposed to be ? Does the modern taste demand a certain *sensation* feeling, *sensation* sentiment, only because it is actually experienced ?

This is a question to be answered on some other occasion, but, in the meantime, it would seem as if all the good humours and good spirits of former generations had certainly deserted our own heart-broken ladies. Instead of cheerful endurance, the very worst is made of every passing discomfort. Their laughter is forced, even their happiness is only calm content, for they cannot so readily recover from the two first volumes. They no longer smile and trip through country-dances hand-in-hand with their adorers, but waltz with heavy hearts and dizzy brains, while the hero who scorns them looks on. Open the second volume, you will see that, instead of sitting in the drawing-room or plucking roses in the bower, or looking pretty and pleasant, they are lying on their beds with agonizing headaches, walking desperately along the streets they know not whither, or staring out of window in blank despair. It would be curious to ascertain in how great a degree language measures feeling. People now-a-days, with the help of the penny-post and the telegraph, and the endless means of communication and of coming and going, are certainly able to care for a greater number of persons than they could have done a hundred years ago; perhaps they are also able to care more for, and to be more devotedly attached to, those whom they already love; they certainly say more about it, and, perhaps, with its greater abundance of opportunity, expression may have depreciated in value. And this may possibly account for some of the difference between the reserved and measured language of a Jane Bennett and the tempestuous confidences of an Elizabeth Gilmour. Much that is written now is written with a certain exaggeration and an earnestness which was undreamt of in the placid days when, according to Miss Austen, a few assembly balls and morning visits, a due amount of vexation reasonably surmounted, or at most "smiles reined in, and spirits dancing in private rapture," a journey to Bath, an attempt at private theatricals or a thick packet of explanations hurriedly signed with the hero's initials, were the events, the emotions, the aspirations of a life-time. They had their faults and their accomplishments: witness Emma's very mild performances in the way of portrait taking; but as for tracking murderers, agonies of mystery, and disappointed affections, flinging themselves at gentlemen's heads, marrying two husbands at once, flashing with irrepressible emotion, or only betraying the deadly conflict going on within by a slight quiver of the pale lip—such ideas never entered their pretty little heads. They fainted a good deal, we must confess, and wrote long and tedious letters to aged clergymen residing in the country. They exclaimed "La!" when anything surprised them, and were, we believe, dreadfully afraid of cows, notwithstanding their country connection. But they were certainly a more amiable race than their successors. It is a fact that people do not usually feel the same affection for phenomenons, however curious, that they do for perfectly commonplace human creatures. And yet at the same time we confess that it does seem somewhat ungrateful to complain of these living and adventurous heroines to whom, with all their vagaries,

one has owed such long and happy hours of amusement and entertainment and comfort, and who have gone through so much for our edification.

Still one cannot but wonder how Miss Austen would have written if she had lived to-day instead of yesterday. It has been often said that novels might be divided into two great divisions—the objective and the subjective : almost all men's novels belong to the former; almost all women's, now-a-days, to the latter definition. Analysis of emotion instead of analysis of character, the history of feeling instead of the history of events, seems to be the method of the majority of penwomen. The novels that we have in hand to review now are examples of this mode of treatment, and the truth is, that except in the case of the highest art and most consummate skill, there is no comparison between the interest excited by facts and general characteristics, as compared with the interest of feeling and emotion told with only the same amount of perception and ability.

Few people, for instance, could read the story of the poor lady who lived too much alone without being touched by the simple earnestness with which her sorrows are written of, although in the bare details of her life there might not be much worth recording. But this is the history of poor Mrs. Storn's feelings more than that of her life—of feelings very sad and earnest and passionate, full of struggle for right, with truth to help and untruth to bewilder her; with power and depth and reality in her struggles, which end at last in a sad sort of twilight that seems to haunt one as one shuts up the book. In *George Geith*, of which we will speak more presently, there is the same sadness and minor key ringing all through the composition. Indeed, all this author's tunes are very melancholy—so melancholy, that it would seem almost like a defect if they were not at the same time very sweet as well as very sad. *Too Much Alone* is a young woman who marries a very silent, upright, and industrious chemical experimentalist. He has well-cut features, honourable feelings, a genius for discovering cheap ways of producing acids and chemicals, as well as ideas about cyanosium, which, combined with his perfect trust in and neglect of his wife, very nearly bring about the destruction of all their domestic happiness. She is a pale, sentimental young woman, with raven-black hair, clever, and longing for sympathy—a *femme incomprise*, it must be confessed, but certainly much more charming and pleasant and pathetic than such people usually are. Days go by, lonely alike for her, without occupation or friendship or interest ; she cannot consort with the dull and vulgar people about her; she has her little son, but he is not a companion. Her husband is absorbed in his work. She has no one to talk to, nothing to do or think of. She lives all alone in the great noisy life-full city, sad and pining and wistful and weary. Here is a little sketch of her :—

Lina was sitting, thinking about the fact that she had been married many months more than three years, and that on the especial Sunday morning in question she was just of age. It was still early, for Mr. Storn, according to the fashion of most London folks, borrowed hours from both ends of the day, and his wife was sitting there until it should be time for her to get ready and to go to church alone. Her chair was placed by the open window, and though the city was London, and the

locality either the ward of Eastcheap or that of Allhallows, Barking (I am not quite sure which), fragrant odours came wafted to her senses through the casement, for in this as in all other things save one, Maurice had considered her nurture and her tastes, and covered the roof of the counting-house with flowers. But for the distant roll of the carriages, she might just as well have been miles away from London She was dressed in a pink morning dress, with her dark hair plainly braided upon her pale fair cheek, and she had a staid sober look upon her face, that somehow made her appear handsomer than in the days of old before she married. . . .

This very Sunday Lina meets a dangerous fascinating man of the world, who is a friendly well-meaning creature withal, and who can understand and sympathize with her sadness and solitude only too well for her peace of mind, and for his own : again and again she appeals to her husband : " I will find pleasure in the driest employment if you will only let me be with you, and not leave me alone." She only asks for justice, for confidence—not the confidence of utter desertion and trust and neglect, but the daily confidence and communion, which is a necessity to some women, the permission to share in the common interests and efforts of her husband's life; to be allowed to sympathize, and to live, and to understand, instead of being left to pine away lonely, unhappy, half asleep, and utterly weary and disappointed. Unfortunately Mr. Storn thinks it is all childish nonsense, and repulses her in the most affectionate manner ; poor unhappy Lina behaves as well as ever she can, and devotes herself to her little boy, only her hair grows blacker, and her face turns paler and paler, day by day ; she is very good and struggles to be contented, and will not allow herself to think too much of Herbert, and so things go on in the old way for a long, long time. At last a crisis comes—troubles thicken—Maurice Storn is always away when he is most wanted, little Geordie, the son, gets hold of some of his father's chemicals, which have cost Lina already so much happiness and confidence, and the poor little boy poisons himself with something sweet out of a little bottle. All the description which follows is very powerfully and pathetically told—Maurice Storn's silence and misery, Lina's desperation and sudden change of feeling. After all her long struggles and efforts she suddenly breaks down, all her courage leaves her, and her desperate longings for right and clinging to truth.

She said in her soul, " I have lost the power either to bear or to resist. I have tried to face my misfortune, and I feel I am incapable of doing it . . . why should I struggle or fear any more ? I know the worst that life can bring me, I have buried my heart and my hopes with my boy. Why should I strive or struggle any more ? " And Lina had got to such a pass that she forgot to answer to herself, Because it is right—right and wrong, she had lost sight of them both.

And so poor Mrs. Storn almost makes up her mind to leave her home, unconscious that already people are beginning to talk of her, first one and then another. Nobody seems very bad. Everybody is going wrong. Maurice abstracted over his work, Lina in a frenzy of wretchedness ; home-fires are extinct, outside the cold winds blow, and the snow lies half melted on the ground. The man of the world is waiting in the cold, very miserable too ; their best impulses and chances seem failing them, all

about there seems to be only pain, and night, and trouble, and sorrow for every one. But at last the morning dawns, and Lina is saved.

Everything is then satisfactorily arranged, and Maurice is ruined, and Lina's old affection for him returns. The man of the world is also ruined, and determines to emigrate to some distant colony. Mr. and Mrs. Storn retire to an old-fashioned gabled house at Enfield, where they have no secrets from each other, and it is here that Maurice one day tells Lina that he has brought an old friend to say good-by to her, and then poor Herbert Clyne, the late man of the world, comes across the lawn, and says farewell for ever to both his friends in a very pathetic and touching scene.

Lina Storn is finally disposed of in *Too Much Alone*, but Maurice Storn reappears in disguise, and under various assumed names in almost all the author's subsequent novels. Although we have never yet been able to realize this stern-cut personage as satisfactorily as we should have liked to do, yet we must confess to a partiality for him, and a respect for his astounding powers of application, and we are not sorry to meet him over and over again. Whether he turns his attention to chemistry, to engineering, to figures, to theology, the amount of business he gets through is almost bewildering, at the same time something invariably goes wrong, over which he has no control, notwithstanding all his industry and ability, and he has to acknowledge the weakness of humanity, and the insufficiency of the sternest determination, and to order and arrange the events of life to its own will and fancy. To the woman or women depending upon him he is invariably kind, provokingly reserved, and faithfully devoted. He is of good family and extremely proud, and he is obliged for various reasons to live in the city. All through the stories one seems to hear a suggestive accompanying roll of cart-wheels and carriages. Poor Lina's loneliness seems all the more lonely for the contrast of the busy movement all round about her own silent, sad life. "At first it seemed to give a sort of stimulus to her own existence, hearing the carts roll by, the cabs rattle past, the shout and hum of human voices break on her ear almost before she was awake of a morning. . . . But wear takes the gloss off all things, even off the sensation of being perplexed and amused by the whirl of life."

In *City and Suburb*, this din of London life, and the way in which city people live and strive, is capitally described; the heroine is no less a person than a Lady Mayoreen, a certain Ruby Ruthven, a beauty, capricious, and wayward, and impetuous, and she is perhaps one of the best of Mrs. Trafford's creation. For old friendship's sake, we cannot help giving the preference to *Too Much Alone*; but *City and Suburb* is in many respects an advance upon it, and *George Geith* is in its way better than either. The *Moores* and the *Fors* did not seem to us equal in power to either of the preceding works.

It seems strange as one thinks of it that before these books came out no one had ever thought of writing about city life: there is certainly an interest and a charm about old London, its crowded busy streets, its

ancient churches and buildings, and narrow lanes and passages with quaint names, of which dwellers in the stucco suburbs have no conception. There is the river with its wondrous freight, and the busy docks, where stores of strange goods are lying, that bewilder one as one gazes. Vast horizons of barrels waiting to be carted, forests of cinnamon-trees and spices, of canes, of ivory, thousands and thousands of great elephant tusks, sorted and stored away, workmen, sailors of every country, a great unknown strange life and bustle. Or if you come away, you find silence, old courts, iron gateways, ancient squares where the sunshine falls quietly, a glint of the past, as it were, a feeling of what has been, and what still lingers among the old worn stones and bricks, and traditions of the city. Even the Mansion House, with its kindly old customs and welcome and hospitality, has a charm and romance of its own, from the golden postilion to the mutton-pies, which are the same as they were hundreds and hundreds of years ago. All this queer sentiment belonging to old London, the author feels and describes with great cleverness and appreciation.

George Geith is the latest and the most popular of Mrs. Trafford's novels, and it deserves its popularity, for although *Too Much Alone* is more successfully constructed as a story, this is far better and more powerfully written than any of her former stories. It is the history of the man whose name it bears—a man "to work so long as he has a breath left to draw, who would die in his harness rather than give up, who would fight against opposing circumstances whilst he had a drop of blood in his veins, whose greatest virtues are untiring industry and indomitable courage, and who is worth half-a-dozen ordinary men, if only because of his iron frame and unconquerable spirit." Here is a description of the place in which he lived, on the second floor of the house which stands next but one to the Old gateway on the Fenchurch Street side :—

If quietness was what he wanted, he had it; except in the summer evenings when the children of the Fenchurch Street housekeepers brought their marbles through the passage, and fought over them on the pavement in front of the office-door, there was little noise of life in the old churchyard. The sparrows in the trees or the footfall of some one entering or quitting the court alone disturbed the silence. The roar of Fenchurch Street on the one side, and of Leadenhall Street on the other, sounded in Pen Court but as a distant murmur, and to a man whose life was spent among figures, and who wanted to devote his undivided attention to his work, this silence was a blessing not to be properly estimated save by those who have passed through that maddening ordeal which precedes being able to abstract the mind from external influence. . . . For the historical recollections associated with the locality he had chosen, George Geith did not care a rush.

George Geith lives with his figures, "climbing Alps on Alps of them with silent patience, great mountains of arithmetic with gold lying on their summits for him to grasp;" he works for eighteen hours a day. People came up his stairs to ask for his help—

Bankrupts, men who were good enough, men who were doubtful, and men who were (speaking commercially) bad, had all alike occasion to seek the accountant's advice and assistance; retailers, who kept clerks for their sold books, but not for their bought; whisks; dealers who did not want to let their clerks see their books at all; shrewd men

of business who yet could not balance a ledger ; ill-educated traders, who, though they could make money, would have been ashamed to show their ill-written and worse spelled journals to a stranger ; unhappy wretches, shivering on the brink of insolvency ; creditors who did not think much of the cooking of some dishonest debtors' accounts ; —all these came and sat in George Geith's office, and waited their turn to see him.

And among these comes a country gentleman, a M. Molozane, who is on the brink of ruin, and who has three daughters at home at the Dower House, near Wattisbridge.

There is a secret in George Geith's life and a reason for which he toils ; and although early in the story he makes a discovery which relieves him from part of his anxiety and need for money, he still works on from habit, and one day he receives a letter from this M. Molozane, begging him to come to his assistance, and stating that he is ill and cannot come to town. George thinks he would like a breath of country air and determines to go. The description of Wattisbridge and the road thither is delightful ; lambs, cool grass, shaded ponds and cattle, trailing branches, brambles, roses, here a house, there a farm-yard, gently sloping hills crowned with clumps of trees, distant purple haze, a calm blue sky and fleecy clouds, and close at hand a grassy glade with cathedral branches, a young lady, a black retriever and a white poodle, all of which George Guth notices as he walks along the path, "through the glade, under the shadow of the arching trees, straight as he can go to meet his destiny."

Beryl Molozane, with the dear sweet kindly brown eyes, that seemed to be always laughing and loving, is as charming a destiny as any hero could wish to meet upon a summer's day, as she stands with the sunshine streaming on her nut-brown, red golden hair. She should indeed be capable of converting the most rabid of reviewers to the modern ideal of what a heroine should be, with her April moods and her tenderness and laughter, her frankness, her cleverness, her gay innocent chatter, her outspoken youth and brightness. It is she who manages for the whole household, who works for her father, who protects her younger sister, who schemes and plans, and thinks, and loves for all. No wonder that George loses his heart to her ; even in the very beginning we are told when he first sees her, that he would have

Taken the sunshine out of his own life to save the clouds from darkening down on hers. He would have left her dear face to smile on still, the guileless heart to throb calmly. He would have left his day without a noon to prevent night from closing over hers. He would have known that it was possible for him to love so well that he should become unselfish

One cannot help wondering that the author could have had the heart to treat poor pretty Beryl so harshly, when her very creation, the stern and selfish George himself, would have suffered any pain to spare her if it were possible. It is not our object here to tell a story at length, which is interesting enough to be read for itself, and touching enough to be remembered long after the last of the three volumes is closed. To be remembered, but so sadly, that one cannot but ask oneself for what reason

are such stories written. Is it to make one sad with sorrows which never happened, but which are told with so much truth and pathos that they almost seem for a minute as if they were one's own? Is it to fill one's eyes with tears for griefs which might be but which have not been, and for troubles that are not, except in a fancy, for the sad sad fate of a sweet and tender woman, who might have been made happy to gladden all who were interested in her story; or are they written to cheer one in dull hours, to soothe, to interest, and to distract from weary thoughts, from which it is at times a blessing to escape?

A lady putting down this book the other day, suddenly burst into tears, and said, "Why did they give me this to read?" Why, indeed! Beryl might have been more happy, and no one need have been the worse. She and her George might have been made comfortable together for a little while, and we might have learnt to know her all the same. Does sorrow come like this, in wave upon wave, through long sad years, without one gleam of light to play upon the waters? Sunshine is sunshine, and warms and vivifies, and brightens, though the clouds are coming too, sooner or later, and in nature no warning voices spoil the happiest hours of our lives by useless threats and terrifying hints of what the future may bring forth. Happiness remembered, is happiness always; but where would past happiness be if there was some one always standing by, as in this book, to point with a sigh to future troubles long before they come, and to sadden and spoil all the pleasant spring-time, and all the sport and youth by dreary forebodings of old age, of autumn, and winter snow, and bitter winds that have not yet begun to blow. "So smile the heavens upon that holy act," says the Friar, "that after sorrow chide us not." "Amen, amen," says Romeo; "but come what sorrow can, it cannot counteract the exchange of joy that one short minute gives me in her sight." And we wish that George Geith had been more of Romeo's way of thinking.

A sad ending is very touching at the time, and moves many a sympathy, but in prose—for poetry is to be criticised from a different standard—who ever reads a melancholy story over and over and over as some stories are read? The more touchingly and earnestly the tale is told, the less disposed one is to revert to it, and the more deeply one feels for the fictitious friends whom one cannot help loving at times, almost as if they were real ones, the less heart one has to listen to the history of their pains, and fears, and sufferings—knowing, as one does, that there is only sorrow in store for them, no relief coming, no help anywhere, no salvation at hand. Mr. Thackeray used to say that a bad ending to a book was a great mistake, that he never would make one of his own finish badly. What was the use of it? Nobody ever cared to read a book a second time when it ended unhappily.

There is a great excuse in the case of the writer of *George Geith*, who possesses in no common degree sad powers of pathos. Take for instance the parting between George and Beryl. She says that it is no use talking about what is past and gone; that they must part, and he knows it.

Then for a moment George misunderstood her. The agony of her own heart, the intense bitterness of the draught she was called upon to drink, the awful hopelessness of her case, and the terrible longing she felt to be permitted to live and love once more, sharpened her voice and gave it a tone she never intended.

"Have you grown to doubt me?" he asked. "Do you not know I would marry you to-morrow if I could? Do you think that throughout all the years to come, be they many or be they few, I could change to you? Oh, Beryl, do you not believe that through time and through eternity I shall love you and none other?"

"I do not doubt; I believe," and her tears fell faster and her sobs became more uncontrollable.

What was she to him at that moment? More than wife; more than all the earth; more than heaven; more than life. She was something more, far more, than any poor words we know can express. What he felt for her was beyond love, the future he saw stretching away for himself without her, without a hope of her, was in its blank weariness so terrible as to be beyond despair. Had the soul been taken out of his body, life could not have been more valueless. Take away the belief of immortality, and what has mortality left to live for?

At the moment George Geith knew, in a stupid, dull kind of way, that to him Beryl had been an earthly immortality; that to have her again for his own, had been the one hope of his weary life, which had made the days and the hours endurable unto him.

Oh! woe for the great waste of love which there is in this world below; to think how it is filling some hearts to bursting, whilst others are starving for the lack thereof; to think how those who may never be man and wife, those who are about to be parted by death, those whose love can never be anything but a sorrow and to merge their own identity in that of one another, whilst the lawful hands of respectable households wrangle and quarrel, and honest widows order their mourning with deep resignation, and disconsolate husbands look out for second wives.

Why is it that the ewe-lamb is always that selected for sacrifice? Why is it that the creature upon which man sets his heart shall be the one snatched from him? Why is it that the thing we prize perishes? That as the flower fades and the grass withereth, so the object of man's love, the delight of his eyes and the desire of his soul, passeth away to leave him desolate?

On George Geith the blow fell with such force that he groped darkly about, trying to grasp his trouble; trying to meet some tangible foe with whom to grapple. Life without Beryl; days without sun; winter without a hope of summer; nights that could never know a dawn. My reader, have patience, have patience with the despair; grief of this strong man, who had at length met with a sorrow that crushed him.

Have patience whilst I try to tell of the end that came to his business and to his pleasure; to the years he had spent in toil; to the hours in which he had tasted enjoyment! To the struggles there had come success; to the hopes fruition; but with success and with fruition there had come likewise death.

Everything for him was ended in existence. Living, he was as one dead. Wealth could not console him; success could not comfort him; for him, for this hard-fierce worker, for the man who had so longed for rest, for physical repose, for domestic pleasures, the flowers were to have no more perfume, home no more happiness; the earth no more loveliness. The first spring blossoms, the summer glory on the trees and fields, the fruits and flowers, and thousand tinted leaves of autumn, and the snows and frosts of winter, were never to touch his heart, nor stir his senses in the future.

Never the home he pictured might be his, never, ah, never! He had built his dream-house on the sands, and, behold, the winds blew and the waves beat, and he saw it all disappear, leaving nought but dust and ashes, but death and despair! Madly he fought with his sorrow, as though it were a living thing that he could grasp and conquer; he turned on it constantly, and strove to trample it down.

No comment is needed to point out the power and pathos of this long extract. The early story of George Geith is in many respects the same as the story of Warrington in *Pendennis*, but the end is far more sad and disastrous, and as it has been shown, pretty bright Beryl dies of her cruel tortures, and it is, in truth, difficult to forgive the author for putting her through so much unnecessary pain and misery.

One peculiarity which strikes one in all these books is, that the feelings are stronger and more vividly alive than the people who are made to experience them. Even Beryl herself is more like a sweet and tender idea of a woman than a living woman with substance and stuff, and bone and flesh, though her passion and devotion are all before us as we read, and seem so alive and so true, that they touch us and master us by their intensity and vividness.

The sympathy between the writer and the reader of a book is a very subtle and strange one, and there is something curious in the necessity for expression on both sides: the writer pouring out the experience and feelings of years, and the reader, relieved and strengthened in certain moods to find that others have experienced and can speak of certain feelings, have passed through phases with which he himself is acquainted. The imaginary Public is a most sympathizing friend; he will listen to the author's sad story; he does not interrupt or rebuff him, or weary with impatient platitudes, until he has had his say and uttered all that was within him. The author perhaps writes on all the sad experience of years, good and ill, successes, hopes, disappointments, or happier memories, of unexpected reprieves, of unheeded-for good fortunes, of old friendships, long-tried love, faithful sympathies enduring to the end. All this, not in the words and descriptions of the events which really happened, but in a language of which he or she alone holds the key, or of which, perhaps, the full significance is scarcely known even to the writer. Only in the great unknown world which he addresses there surely is the kindred spirit elsewhere, the kind heart, the friend of friends who will understand him. Novel-writing must be like tears to some women, the vent and the relief of many a chafing spirit. People say why are so many novels written? and the answer is, because there are so many people feeling, thinking, and enduring, and longing to give voice and expression to the silence of the life in the midst of which they are struggling. The necessity for expression is a great law of nature, one for which there is surely some good and wise reason, — there must be for that natural desire for sympathy which is common to so many. There seems to be something wrong and incomplete in those creatures which do not need it, something inhuman in those who are incapable of understanding the great and tender bond by which all humanity is joined and bound together. A bond of common pain and pleasure, of common fear and hope, and love, and weakness.

Poets tell us that not only human creatures, but the whole universe, is thrilling with sympathy and expression, speaking, entreating, uttering, in plaints or praise, or in a wonder of love and admiration. What do the

sounds of a bright spring day mean? Cocks crow in the farmyards and valleys below; high up in the clear heavens the lark is pouring out its sweet passionate thrills; shriller and sweeter, and more complete as the tiny speck soars higher and higher still, "flow the profuse strains of unpremeditated art." The sheep baa and browse, and shake their meek heads; children shout for the very pleasure of making a sound in the sunshine Nature is bursting with new green, brightening, changing into a thousand lovely shades. Seas washing and sparkling against the shores, streaks of faint light in distant horizons, soft winds blowing about the landscape; what is all this but an appeal for sympathy, a great natural expression of happiness and emotion?

And perhaps, after all, the real secret of our complaint against modern heroines is not so much that they are natural and speak out what is in them, and tell us of deeper and more passionate feeling than ever stirred the even tenour of their grandmothers' narratives, but that they are morbid, constantly occupied with themselves, one-sided, and ungrateful to the wonders and blessings of a world which is not less beautiful now than it was a hundred years ago, where perhaps there is a less amount of sorrows, and a less amount of pain most certainly than at the time when Miss Austen and Miss Ferrier said their say. Jane Austen's own story was more sad and more pathetic than that of many and many of the heroines whom we have been passing in review and complaining of, and who complain to us so loudly; but in her, knowledge of good and evil, and of sorrow and anxiety and disappointment, evinced itself, not in impotent railings against the world and impatient paragraphs and monotonous complaints, but in a delicate sympathy with the smallest events of life, a charming appreciation of its common aspects, a playful wisdom and kindly humour, which charm us to this day.

Many of the heroines of to-day are dear and tried old friends, and would be sorely missed out of our lives, and leave irreparable blanks on our bookshelves; numbers of them are married and happily settled down in various country-houses and parsonages in England and Wales; but for the sake of their children who are growing up round about them, and who will be the heroes and heroines of the next generation or two, we would appeal to their own sense of what is right and judicious, and ask them if they would not desire to see their daughters brought up in a simpler, less spasmodic, less introspective and morbid way than they themselves have been? Are they not sometimes haunted by the consciousness that their own experiences may have suggested a strained and affected view of life to some of their younger readers, instead of encouraging them to cheerfulness, content, to a moderate estimate of their own infallibility, a charity for others, and a not too absorbing contemplation of themselves, their own virtues and shortcomings? "Avant tout, le temps est passé," says George Sand, "et toi qui fais avec d'esprit la guerre à ce travers, tu en es pincé de la tête aux pieds."



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CHAPTER VIII

THE NORFOLK BROADS.



THE little group gathered together in Major Milroy's parlour to wait for the carriages from Thorpe-Ambrose would hardly have conveyed the idea, to any previously uninstructed person introduced among them, of a party assembled in expectation of a picnic. They were almost dull enough, so far as outward appearances went, to have been a party assembled in expectation of a marriage.

Even Miss Milroy herself, though conscious of looking her best in her bright muslin dress and her gaily-feathered new hat, was at this inauspicious moment Miss Milroy under a cloud. Although Allan's note had assured her, in Allan's strongest language, that the one great object of reconciling the gen-

uine's arrival with the celebration of the picnic, was, in effect, achieved, the doubt still remained whether the plan propped—whether

it might be—would meet with her father's approval. In a word, Miss Milroy declined to feel sure of her day's pleasure until the carriage made its appearance and took her from the door. The major, on his side arrayed for the festive occasion in a tight blue frock-coat which he had not worn for years, and threatened with a whole long day of separation from his old friend and comrade the clock, was a man out of his element if ever such a man existed yet. As for the friends who had been asked at Allan's request—the widow lady (otherwise Mrs. Pentecost) and her son (the Reverend Samuel) in delicate health—two people less capable, apparently, of adding to the hilarity of the day could hardly have been discovered in the length and breadth of all England. A young man who plays his part in society by looking on in green spectacles, and listening with a sickly smile, may be a prodigy of intellect and a mine of virtue, but he is hardly, perhaps, the right sort of man to have at a picnic. An old lady afflicted with deafness, whose one inexhaustible subject of interest is the subject of her son, and who (on the happily rare occasions when that son opens his lips) asks everybody eagerly, "What does my boy say?" is a person to be pitied in respect of her infirmities, and a person to be admired in respect of her maternal devotedness, but not a person, it is the thing could possibly be avoided, to take to a picnic. Such a man, nevertheless, was the Reverend Samuel Pentecost, and such a woman was the Reverend Samuel's mother; and, in the dearth of any other producible guests, there they were, engaged to eat, drink, and be merry for the day at Mr. Armadale's pleasure-party to the Norfolk Broads.

The arrival of Allan, with his faithful follower, Pedgit Junior, at his heels, roused the flagging spirits of the party at the cottage. The plan for enabling the governess to join the picnic, if she arrived that day, satisfied even Major Milroy's anxiety to show all proper attention to the lady who was coming into his house. After writing the necessary note of apology and invitation, and addressing it in her very best handwriting to the new governess, Miss Milroy ran upstairs to say good-by to her mother, and returned, with a smiling face and a side-look of relief directed at her father, to announce that there was nothing now to keep any of them a moment longer indoors. The company at once directed their steps to the garden-gate, and were there met face to face by the second great difficulty of the day. How were the six persons of the picnic to be divided between the two open carriages that were in waiting for them?

Here, again, Pedgit Junior exhibited his invaluable faculty of contrivance. This highly-cultivated young-man possessed in an eminent degree an accomplishment more or less peculiar to all the young men of the age we live in—he was perfectly capable of taking his pleasure without forgetting his business. Such a client as the Master of Thorpe-Ambrose fell but seldom in his father's way, and to pay special but unobtrusive attention to Allan all through the day, was the business of which young Pedgit, while proving himself to be the life and soul of the picnic, never once lost sight from the beginning of the merrymaking to the end. He had despatched

the state of affairs between Miss Milroy and Allan at a glance; and he at once provided for his client's inclinations in that quarter, by offering (in virtue of his local knowledge) to lead the way in the first carriage, and by asking Major Milroy and the curate if they would do him the honour of accompanying him. "We shall pass a very interesting place to a military man, sir," said young Pedgiff, addressing the major, with his happy and unblushing confidence, "the remains of a Roman encampment. And my father, sir, who is a subscriber," proceeded this rising lawyer, turning to the curate, "wished me to ask your opinion of the new Infant School buildings at Little Gill Beck. Would you kindly give it me, as we go along?" He opened the carriage-door, and helped in the major and the curate, before they could either of them start any difficulties. The necessary result followed. Allan and Miss Milroy rode together in the same carriage, with the extra convenience of a deaf old lady in attendance to keep the squire's compliments within the necessary limits.

Never yet had Allan enjoyed such an interview with Miss Milroy as the interview he now obtained on the road to the Broads. The dear old lady, after a little anecdote or two on the subject of her son, did the one thing wanting to secure the perfect felicity of her two youthful companions —she became considerably blind for the occasion, as well as deaf. A quarter of an hour after the carriage left the major's cottage, the poor old soul, reposing on snug cushions, and fanned by a fine summer air, fell peaceably asleep. Allan made love, and Miss Milroy sanctioned the manufacture of that occasionally precious article of human commerce, sublimely indifferent on both sides to a solemn base accompaniment on two notes, played by the curate's mother's unsuspecting nose. The only interruption to the love-making (the snoring being a thing more grave and permanent in its nature, was not interrupted at all) came at intervals from the carriage ahead. Not satisfied with having the major's Roman encampment and the curate's Infant Schools on his mind, Pedgiff Junior rose erect from time to time in his place, and, respectfully hailing the hindmost vehicle, directed Allan's attention, in a shrill tenor voice, and with an excellent choice of language, to objects of interest on the road. The only way to quiet him was to answer, which Allan invariably did by shouting back, "Yes, beautiful"—upon which young Pedgiff disappeared again in the recesses of the leading carriage, and took up the Romans and the Infants where he had left them last.

The scene through which the picnic party was now passing, merited far more attention than it received either from Allan or Allan's friends.

An hour's steady driving from the major's cottage had taken young Armandale and his guests beyond the limits of Midwinter's solitary walk, and was now bringing them nearer and nearer to one of the strangest and loveliest aspects of Nature, which the inland landscape, not of Norfolk only, but of all England, can show. Little by little, the face of the country began to change as the carriage approached the remote and lonely districts of the Broads. The wheat-fields and turnip-fields became per-

ceptibly fewer ; and the fat green grazing-grounds on either side grew wider and wider in their smooth and sweeping range. Heaps of dry rushes and reeds, laid up for the basket-maker and the thatcher, began to appear at the roadside. The old gabled cottages of the early part of the drive dwindled and disappeared, and huts with mud walls rose in their place. With the ancient church towers and the wind and water mills, which had hitherto been the only lofty objects seen over the low marshy flat, there now rose all round the horizon, gliding slow and distant behind fringes of pollard willows, the sails of invisible boats moving on invisible waters. All the strange and startling anomalies presented by an inland agricultural district, isolated from other districts by its intricate surrounding network of pools and streams—holding its communications and carrying its produce by water instead of by land—began to present themselves in closer and closer succession. Nets appeared on cottage palings : little flat-bottomed boats lay strangely at rest among the flowers in cottage gardens ; farmers' men passed to and fro clad in composite costume of the coast and the field, in sailors' hats and fishermen's boots, and ploughmen's smocks,—and even yet the low-lying labyrinth of waters, embosomed in its mystery of solitude, was a hidden labyrinth still. A minute more, and the carriages took a sudden turn from the hard high-road into a little weedy lane. The wheels ran noiseless on the damp and spongy ground. A lonely outlying cottage appeared, with its litter of nets and boats. A few yards farther on, and the last morsel of firm earth suddenly ended in a tiny creek and quay. One turn more to the end of the quay—and there, spreading its great sheet of water, far and bright and smooth, on the right hand and the left—there, as pure in its spotless blue, as still in its heavenly peacefulness as the summer sky above it, was the first of the Norfolk Broads.

The carriages stopped, the love-making broke off, and the venerable Mrs. Pentecost, recovering the use of her senses at a moment's notice, fixed her eyes sternly on Allan the instant she woke.

"I see in your face, Mr. Armadale," said the old lady, sharply, "that you think I have been asleep."

The consciousness of guilt acts differently on the two sexes. In nine cases out of ten, it is a much more manageable consciousness with a woman than with a man. All the confusion, on this occasion, was on the man's side. While Allan reddened and looked embarrassed, the quick-witted Miss Milroy instantly embraced the old lady with a burst of innocent laughter. "He is quite incapable, dear Mrs. Pentecost," said the little hypocrite, "of anything so ridiculous as thinking you have been asleep!"

"All I wish Mr. Armadale to know," pursued the old lady, still suspicious of Allan, "is, that my head being giddy, I am obliged to close my eyes in a carriage. Closing the eyes, Mr. Armadale, is one thing, and going to sleep is another. Where is my son?"

The Reverend Samuel appeared silently at the carriage-door with his

green spectacles and his sickly smile in perfect working order, and assisted his mother to get out. ("Did you enjoy the drive, Sammy?" asked the old lady. "Beautiful scenery, my dear, wasn't it?") Young Pedgit, on whom all the arrangements for exploring the Broads devolved, bustled about, giving his orders to the boatmen. Major Milroy, placid and patient, sat apart on an overturned punt, and privately looked at his watch. Was it past noon already? More than an hour past. For the first time, for many a long year, the famous clock at home had struck in an empty workshop. Time had lifted his wonderful scythe, and the corporal and his men had relieved guard, with no master's eye to watch their performances, with no master's hand to encourage them to do their best. The major sighed as he put his watch back in his pocket. "I'm afraid I'm too old for this sort of thing," thought the good man, looking about him dreamily. "I don't find I enjoy it as much as I thought I should. When are we going on the water, I wonder? where's Neelie?"

Neelie—more properly Miss Milroy—was behind one of the carriages with the promoter of the picnic. They were immersed in the interesting subject of their own Christian names, and Allan was as near a point-blank proposal of marriage, as it is well possible for a thoughtless young gentleman of two-and-twenty to be.

"Tell me the truth," said Miss Milroy, with her eyes modestly riveted on the ground, "when you first knew what my name was, you didn't like it, did you?"

"I like everything that belongs to you," rejoined Allan, vigorously. "I think Eleanor is a beautiful name; and yet, I don't know why, I think the major made an improvement when he changed it to Neelie."

"I can tell you why, Mr. Armadale," said the major's daughter, with great gravity. "There are some unfortunate people in this world, whose names are—how can I express it?—whose names are, Misfits. Mine is a Misfit. I don't blame my parents, for of course it was impossible to know when I was a baby how I should grow up. But as things are, I and my name don't fit each other. When you hear a young lady called Eleanor, you think of a tall, beautiful, interesting creature directly—the very opposite of me! With my personal appearance Eleanor sounds ridiculous—and Neelie, as you yourself remarked, is just the thing. No! no! don't say any more—I'm tired of the subject; I've got another name in my head, if we must speak of names, which is much better worth talking about than mine."

She stole a glance at her companion which said plainly enough, "The name is yours." Allan advanced a step nearer to her, and lowered his voice (without the slightest necessity,) to a mysterious whisper. Miss Milroy instantly resumed her investigation of the ground. She looked at it with such extraordinary interest that a geologist might have suspected her of scientific flirtation with the superficial strata.

"What name are you thinking of?" asked Allan.

Miss Milroy addressed her answer, in the form of a remark, to the superficial strata—and let them do what they liked with it, in their capacity of conductors of sound, “If I had been a man,” she said, “I should so like to have been called Allan !”

She felt his eyes on her as she spoke, and, turning her head aside, became absorbed in the graining of the panel at the back of the carriage. “How beautiful it is !” she exclaimed with a sudden outburst of interest in the vast subject of varnish. “I wonder how they do it ?”

Man persists, and woman yields. Allan declined to shift the ground from love-making to coach-making. Miss Milroy dropped the subject.

“Call me by my name, if you really like it,” he whispered persuasively. “Call me ‘Allan,’ for once—just to try.”

She hesitated with a heightened colour and a charming smile, and shook her head. “I couldn’t just yet,” she answered softly.

“May I call you Neelie ? Is it too soon ?”

She looked at him again, with a sudden disturbance about the bosom of her dress, and a sudden flash of tenderness in her dark grey eyes.

“You know best,” she said faintly, in a whisper.

The inevitable answer was on the tip of Allan’s tongue. At the very instant, however, when he opened his lips, the abhorrent high tenor of Pedgiff Junior, shouting for “Mr. Armadale,” rang cheerfully through the quiet air. At the same moment, from the other side of the carriage, the lurid spectacles of the Reverend Samuel showed themselves officially on the search; and the voice of the Reverend Samuel’s mother (who had, with great dexterity, put the two ideas of the presence of water and a sudden movement among the company together) inquired distractedly if anybody was drowned? Sentiment flies and Love shudders at all demonstrations of the noisy kind. Allan said, “Damn it,” and rejoined young Pedgiff. Miss Milroy sighed, and took refuge with her father.

“I’ve done it, Mr. Armadale !” cried young Pedgiff, greeting his patron gaily. “We can all go on the water together ; I’ve got the biggest boat on the Broads. The little skiffs,” he added, in a lower tone, as he led the way to the quay steps, “besides being ticklish and easily upset, won’t hold more than two, with the boatman ; and the major told me he should feel it his duty to go with his daughter, if we all separated in different boats. I thought that would hardly do, sir,” pursued Pedgiff Junior, with a respectfully sly emphasis on the words. “And, besides, if we had put the old lady into a skiff, with her weight (sixteen stone if she’s a pound), we might have had her upside down in the water half her time, which would have occasioned delay, and thrown what you call a damp on the proceedings. Here’s the boat, Mr. Armadale. What do you think of it ?”

The boat added one more to the strangely anomalous objects which appeared at the Broads. It was nothing less than an stout old lifeboat, passing its last declining years on the smooth fresh water, after the stormy days of its youth-time on the wild salt sea. A comfortable little cabin

for the use of fowlers in the winter season, had been built amidships, and a mast and sail adapted for inland navigation had been fitted forward. There was room enough and to spare for the guests, the dinner, and the three men in charge. Allan clapped his faithful lieutenant approvingly on the shoulder; and even Mrs. Pentecost, when the whole party were comfortably established on board, took a comparatively cheerful view of the prospects of the picnic. "If anything happens," said the old lady, addressing the company generally, "there's one comfort for all of us. My son can swim."

The boat floated out from the creek into the placid waters of the Broad; and the full beauty of the scene opened on the view.

On the northward and westward, as the boat reached the middle of the lake, the shore lay clear and low in the sunshine, fringed darkly at certain points by rows of dwarf trees; and dotted here and there, in the opener spaces, with windmills and reed-thatched cottages of puddled mud. Southward, the great sheet of water narrowed gradually to a little group of close-nestling islands which closed the prospect; while to the east a long, gently undulating line of reeds followed the windings of the Broad, and shut out all view of the watery wastes beyond. So clear and so light was the summer-air, that the one cloud in the eastern quarter of the heaven was the smoke cloud left by a passing steamer three miles distant and more on the invisible sea. When the voices of the pleasure-party were still, not a sound rose far or near but the faint ripple at the bows, as the men, with slow deliberate strokes of their long poles, pressed the boat forward softly over the shallow water. The world and the world's turmoil seemed left behind for ever on the land; the silence was the silence of enchantment—the delicious interflow of the soft purity of the sky and the bright tranquillity of the lake.

Established in perfect comfort in the boat—the major and his daughter on one side, the curate and his mother on the other, and Allan and young Pedgilt between the two—the water party floated smoothly towards the little nest of islands at the end of the Broad. Miss Milroy was in raptures; Allan was delighted; and the major for once forgot his clock. Every one felt pleasurable, in their different ways, the quiet and beauty of the scene. Mrs. Pentecost, in her way, felt it like a clairvoyante—with closed eyes.

"Look behind you, Mr. Armadale," whispered young Pedgilt. "I think the person's beginning to enjoy himself."

An unwonted briakness—portentous apparently of coming speech—did certainly at that moment enliven the curate's manner. He jerked his head from side to side like a bird; he cleared his throat, and clasped his hands, and looked with a gentle interest at the company. Getting into spirit seemed, in the case of this excellent person, to be alarmingly like getting into the pulpit.

"Even in this scene of tranquillity," said the Reverend Samuel, essaying out softly with his first contribution to the society, in the shape of a

remark, "the Christian mind—led, so to speak, from one extreme to another—is forcibly recalled to the unstable nature of all earthly enjoyments. How, if this calm should not last? How, if the winds rose and the waters became agitated?"

" You needn't alarm yourself about that, sir," said young Pedgiff; " June's the fine season here—and you can swim."

Mrs. Pentecost (mesmerically affected in all probability by the near neighbourhood of her son) opened her eyes suddenly, and asked with her customary eagerness, " What does my boy say? "

The Reverend Samuel repeated his words in the key that suited his mother's infirmity. The old lady nodded in high approval, and pursued her son's train of thought through the medium of a quotation.

" Ah! " sighed Mrs. Pentecost, with infinite relish, " He rides the whirlwind, Sammy, and directs the storm! "

" Noble words! " said the Reverend Samuel. " Noble and consoling words! "

" I say, " whispered Allan, " if he goes on much longer in that way, what's to be done? "

" I told you, papa, it was a risk to ask them, " added Miss Milroy, in another whisper.

" My dear! " remonstrated the major. " We knew nobody else in the neighbourhood; and as Mr. Armadale kindly suggested our bringing our friends, what could we do? "

" We can't upset the boat, " remarked young Pedgiff, with sardonic gravity. " It's a lifeboat, unfortunately. May I venture to suggest putting something into the reverend gentleman's mouth, Mr. Armadale? It's close on three o'clock. What do you say to ringing the dinner-bell, sir? "

Never was the right man more entirely in the right place than Pedgiff Junior at the picnic. In ten minutes more the boat was brought to a standstill among the reeds; the Thorpe-Ambrose hampers were unpacked on the roof of the cabin; and the current of the curate's eloquence was checked for the day.

How inestimably important in its moral results—and therefore how praiseworthy in itself—is the act of eating and drinking! The social virtues centre in the stomach. A man who is not a better husband, father, and brother, after dinner than before, is, digestively speaking, an incurably vicious man. . What hidden charms of character disclose themselves, what dormant amiabilities awaken when our common humanity gathers together to pour out the gastric juice! At the opening of the hampers from Thorpe-Ambrose, sweet Sociability (offspring of the happy union of Civilization and Mrs. Gripper) exhaled among the boating party, and melted in one friendly fusion the discordant elements of which that party had hitherto been composed. Now did the Reverend Samuel Pentecost, whose light had hitherto been hidden under a bushel, prove at last that he could do something, by proving that he could eat. Now did

Pedgilt Junior shone brighter than ever he had shone yet, in gems of caustic humour and exquisite fertilities of resource. Now did the squire, and the squire's charming guest, prove the triple connection between Champagne that sparkles, Love that grows bolder, and Eyes whose vocabulary is without the word No. Now did cheerful old times come back to the major's memory, and cheerful old stories not told for years find their way to the major's lips. And now did Mrs. Pentecost, coming out wakefully in the whole force of her estimable maternal character, seize on a supplementary fork, and ply that useful instrument incessantly between the choicest morsels in the whole round of dishes, and the few vacant places left available on the Reverend Samuel's plate. "Don't laugh at my son," cried the old lady, observing the merriment which her proceedings produced among the company. "It's my fault, poor dear—I make him eat!" And there are men in this world who, seeing virtues such as these developed at the table, as they are developed nowhere else, can, nevertheless, rank the glorious privilege of dining with the smallest of the diurnal personal worries which necessity imposes on mankind—with buttoning your waistcoat, for example, or lacing your stays! Trust no such monster as this with your tender secrets, your loves and hatreds, your hopes and fears. His heart is uncorrected by his stomach, and the social virtues are not in him.

The last mellow hours of the day and the first cool breezes of the long summer evening had met, before the dishes were all laid waste, and the bottles as empty as bottles should be. This point in the proceedings attained, the picnic party looked lazily at Pedgilt Junior to know what was to be done next. That inexhaustible functionary was equal as ever to all the calls on him. He had a new amusement ready before the quickest of the company could so much as ask him what that amusement was to be.

"Fond of music on the water, Miss Milroy?" he asked in his airiest and pleasantest manner.

Miss Milroy adored music, both on the water and the land—always excepting the one case when she was practising the art herself on the piano at home.

"We'll get out of the reeds first," said young Pedgilt. He gave his orders to the boatmen—dived briskly into the little cabin—and reappeared with a concertina in his hand. "Neat, Miss Milroy, isn't it?" he observed, pointing to his initials, inlaid on the instrument in mother-of-pearl. "My name's Augustus, like my father's. Some of my friends knock off the 'A,' and call me 'Gustus Junior.' A small joke goes a long way among friends, doesn't it, Mr. Armdale? I sing a little, to my own accompaniment, ladies and gentlemen; and, if quite agreeable, I shall be proud and happy to do my best."

"Stop!" cried Mrs. Pentecost; "I doot on music."

With this formidable announcement, the old lady opened a prodigious shawl, from which she never parted night or day, and took out an

car-trumpet of the old-fashioned kind—something between a key bugle and a French horn. “I don’t care to use the thing generally,” explained Mrs. Pentecost, “because I’m afraid of it’s making me deafener than ever. But I can’t and won’t miss the music. I doat on music. If you’ll hold the other end, Sammy, I’ll stick it in my ear. Neelie, my dear, tell him to begin.”

Young Pedgiff was troubled with no nervous hesitation: he began at once—not with songs of the light and modern kind, such as might have been expected from an amateur of his age and character—but with declamatory and patriotic bursts of poetry, set to the bold and blatant music which the people of England loved dearly at the earlier part of the present century, and which, whenever they can get it, they love dearly still. “The Death of Marmion,” “The Battle of the Baltic,” “The Bay of Biscay,” “Nelson,” under various vocal aspects, as exhibited by the late Braham—these were the songs in which the roaring concertina and strident tenor of Gustus Junior exulted together. “Tell me when you’re tired, ladies and gentlemen,” said the minstrel solicitor. “There’s no concert about me. Will you have a little sentiment by way of variety? Shall I wind up with “The Mistletoe Bough,” and “Poor Mary Anne?”

Having favoured his audience with those two cheerful melodies, young Pedgiff respectfully requested the rest of the company to follow his vocal example in turn; offering, in every case, to play “a running accompaniment” impromptu, if the singer would only be so obliging as to favour him with the key-note.

“Go on, somebody!” cried Mrs. Pentecost eagerly. “I tell you again, I doat on music. We haven’t had half enough yet, have we, Sammy?”

The Reverend Samuel made no reply. The unhappy man had reasons of his own—not exactly in his bosom, but a little lower—for remaining silent, in the midst of the general hilarity and the general applause. Alas for humanity! Even maternal love is alloyed with mortal fallibility. Owing much already to his excellent mother, the Reverend Samuel was now additionally indebted to her for a smart indigestion.

Nobody, however, noticed as yet the signs and tokens of internal revolution in the curate’s face. Everybody was occupied in entreating everybody else to sing. Miss Milroy appealed to the founder of the few: “Do sing something, Mr. Agnadle,” she said; “I should so like to hear you!”

“If you once begin, sir,” added the cheerful Pedgiff, “you’ll find it get uncommonly easy as you go on. Music is a science which requires to be taken by the throat at starting.”

“With all my heart,” said Allan, in his good-humoured way. “I know lots of tunes, but the worst of it is the words escape me. I wonder if I can remember one of Moore’s Melodies? My poor mother used to be fond of teaching me Moore’s Melodies when I was a boy.”

“Whose melodies?” asked Mrs. Pentecost. “Moore’s? Aha! I know Tom Moore by heart.”

"Perhaps, in that case, you will be good enough to help me, ma'am, if my memory breaks down," rejoined Allan. "I'll take the easiest melody in the whole collection, if you'll allow me. Everybody knows it—'Eveleen's Bower.'"

"I'm familiar, in a general sort of way, with the national melodies of England, Scotland, and Ireland," said Pedgilt Junior. "I'll accompany you, sir, with the greatest pleasure. This is the sort of thing, I think." He seated himself cross-legged on the roof of the cabin, and burst into a complicated musical improvisation, wonderful to hear—a mixture of instrumental flourishes and groans; a jig corrected by a dirge, and a dirge enlivened by a jig. "That's the sort of thing," said young Pedgilt, with his smile of supreme confidence. "Fire away, air!"

Mrs. Pentecost elevated her trumpet, and Allan elevated his voice. "Oh, weep for the hour when to Eveleen's Bower—" He stopped; the accompaniment stopped; the audience waited. "It's a most extraordinary thing," said Allan; "I thought I had the next line on the tip of my tongue, and it seems to have escaped me. I'll begin again, if you have no objection. 'Oh, weep for the hour when to Eveleen's Bower—'

"The lord of the valley with false vows came," said Mrs. Pentecost.

"Thank you, ma'am," said Allan. "Now I shall get on smoothly. 'Oh, weep for the hour when to Eveleen's Bower, the lord of the valley with false vows came. The moon was shining bright—'"

"No!" said Mrs. Pentecost.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," remonstrated Allan. "'The moon was shining bright—'"

"The moon wasn't doing anything of the kind," said Mrs. Pentecost.

Pedgilt Junior, foreseeing a dispute, persevered *sotto voce* with the accompaniment, in the interests of harmony.

"Moore's own words, ma'am," said Allan, "in my mother's copy of the *Melodies*."

"Your mother's copy was wrong," retorted Mrs. Pentecost. "Didn't I tell you just now that I knew Tom Moore by heart?"

Pedgilt Junior's peace-making concertina still flourished and groaned, in the minor key.

"Well, what did the moon do?" asked Allan, in despair.

"What the moon ought to have done, sir, or Tom Moore wouldn't have written it so," rejoined Mrs. Pentecost. "'The moon hid her light from the heaven that night, and wept behind her clouds o'er the maiden's shame!' I wish that young man would leave off playing," added Mrs. Pentecost, venting her rising irritation on Gustus Junior. "I've had enough of him—he tickles my ears."

"Proud, I'm sure, ma'am," said the unblushing Pedgilt. "The whole of music consists in tickling the ears."

"We seem to be drifting into a sort of argument," remarked Major

Milroy, placidly. "Wouldn't it be better if Mr. Armadale went on with his song?"

"Do go on, Mr. Armadale!" added the major's daughter. "Do go on, Mr. Pedgit!"

"One of them doesn't know the words, and the other doesn't know the music," said Mrs. Pentecost. "Let them go on, if they can!"

"Sorry to disappoint you, ma'am," said Pedgit Junior; "I'm ready to go on, myself, to any extent. Now, Mr. Armadale!"

Allan opened his lips to take up the unfinished melody where he had last left it. Before he could utter a note, the curate suddenly rose, with a ghastly face, and a hand pressed convulsively over the middle region of his waistcoat.

"What's the matter?" cried the whole boating party in chorus.

"I am exceedingly unwell," said the Reverend Samuel Pentecost.

The boat was instantly in a state of confusion. "Eveleen's Bower" expired on Allan's lips, and even the irrepressible concertina of Pedgit was silenced at last. The alarm proved to be quite needless. Mrs. Pentecost's son possessed a mother, and that mother had a bag. In two seconds, the art of medicine occupied the place left vacant in the attention of the company by the art of music.

"Rub it gently, Sammy," said Mrs. Pentecost. "I'll get out the bottles and give you a dose. It's his poor stomach, major. Hold my trumpet, somebody—and stop the boat. You take that bottle, Neelie, my dear; and you take this one, Mr. Armadale; and give them to me as I want them. Ah, poor dear, I know what's the matter with him! Want of power *here*, major—cold, acid, and flatby. Ginger to warm him; soda to correct him; salvolatile to hold him up. There, Sammy! drink it before it settles—and then go and lie down, my dear, in that dog-kennel of a place they call the cabin. No more music!" added Mrs. Pentecost, shaking her forefinger at the proprietor of the concertina—"unless it's a hymn, and that I don't object to."

Nobody appearing to be in a fit frame of mind for singing a hymn, the all-accomplished Pedgit drew upon his stores of local knowledge, and produced a new idea. The course of the boat was immediately changed under his direction. In a few minutes more, the company found themselves in a little island-creek, with a lonely cottage at the far end of it, and a perfect forest of reeds closing the view all round them.

"What do you say, ladies and gentlemen, to stepping on shore and seeing what a reed-cutter's cottage looks like?" suggested young Pedgit.

"We say, yes, to be sure," answered Allan. "I think our spirits have been a little dashed by Mr. Pentecost's illness and Mrs. Pentecost's bag," he added, in a whisper to Miss Milroy. "A change of this sort is the very thing we want to set us all going again."

He and young Pedgit handed Miss Milroy out of the boat. The major followed. Mrs. Pentecost sat immovable as the Egyptian Sphinx, with her bag on her knees, mounting guard over "Sammy" in the cabin.

"We must keep the fun going, sir," said Allan, as he helped the major over the side of the boat. "We haven't half done yet with the enjoyment of the day."

His voice seconded his hearty belief in his own prediction to such good purpose, that even Mrs. Pentecost heard him, and ominously shook her head.

"Ah!" sighed the curate's mother. "If you were as old as I am, young gentleman, you wouldn't feel quite so sure of the enjoyment of the day!"

So, in rebuke of the rashness of youth, spoke the caution of age. The negative view is notoriously the safe view, all the world over—and the Pentecost philosophy is, as a necessary consequence, generally in the right.

CHAPTER IX.

FATE OR CHANCE?

It was close on six o'clock when Allan and his friends left the boat; and the evening influence was creeping already, in its mystery and its stillness, over the watery solitude of the Broads.

The shore in these wild regions was not like the shore elsewhere. Firm as it looked, the garden-ground in front of the reed-cutter's cottage was floating ground, that rose and fell and oozed into puddles under the pressure of the foot. The boatmen who guided the visitors warned them to keep the path, and pointed through gaps in the reeds and pollards to grassy places, on which strangers would have walked confidently, where the crust of earth was not strong enough to bear the weight of a child over the unfathomed depths of slime and water beneath. The solitary cottage, built of planks pitched black, stood on ground that had been steadied and strengthened by resting it on piles. A little wooden tower rose at one end of the roof, and served as a look-out post in the fowling season. From this elevation the eye ranged far and wide over a wilderness of winding water and lonesome marsh. If the reed-cutter had lost his boat, he would have been as completely isolated from all communication with town or village, as if his place of abode had been a light-vessel instead of a cottage. Neither he nor his family complained of their solitude, or looked in any way the rougher or the worse for it. His wife received the visitors hospitably, in a snug little room, with a raftered ceiling, and windows which looked like windows in a cabin on board ship. His wife's father told stories of the famous days when the smugglers came up from the sea at night, rowing through the network of rivers with muffled oars till they gained the lonely Broads, and sunk their spirit casks in the water, far from the coastguard's reach. His wild little children played at hide-and-seek with the visitors; and the visitors in and out of the cottage, and round and round the marsh of

firm earth on which it stood, surprised and delighted by the novelty of all they saw. The one person who noticed the advance of the evening—the one person who thought of the flying time and the stationary Pentecosts in the boat—was young Pedgiff. That experienced pilot of the Broads looked askance at his watch, and drew Allan aside at the first opportunity.

"I don't wish to hurry you, Mr. Armadale," said Pedgiff Junior; "but the time is getting on, and there's a lady in the case."

"A lady?" repeated Allan.

"Yes, sir," rejoined young Pedgiff. "A lady from London; connected (if you'll allow me to jog your memory) with a pony-chaise and white harness."

"Good heavens, the governess!" cried Allan; "why, we have forgotten all about her!"

"Don't be alarmed, sir; there's plenty of time, if we only get into the boat again. This is how it stands, Mr. Armadale. We settled, if you remember, to have the gipsy tea-making at the next 'Broad' to this—Hurle Mere?"

"Certainly," said Allan. "Hurle Mere is the place where my friend Midwinter has promised to come and meet us."

"Hurle Mere is where the governess will be, sir, if your coachman follows my directions," pursued young Pedgiff. "We have got nearly an hour's punting to do, along the twists and turns of the narrow waters (which they call The Sounds here) between this and Hurle Mere; and according to my calculations we must get on board again in five minutes, if we are to be in time to meet the governess and to meet your friend."

"We mustn't miss my friend, on any account," said Allan; "or the governess either, of course. I'll tell the major."

Major Milroy was at that moment preparing to mount the wooden watch-tower of the cottage to see the view. The ever useful Pedgiff volunteered to go up with him, and rattle off all the necessary local explanations in half the time which the reed-cutter would occupy in describing his own neighbourhood to a stranger.

Allan remained standing in front of the cottage, more quiet and more thoughtful than usual. His interview with young Pedgiff had brought his absent friend to his memory for the first time since the picnic party had started. He was surprised that Midwinter, so much in his thoughts on all other occasions, should have been so long out of his thoughts now. Something troubled him, like a sense of self-reproach, as his mind reverted to the faithful friend at home, toiling hard over the steward's books, in his interests and for his sake. "Dear old fellow," thought Allan, "I shall be so glad to see him at the Mere; the day's pleasure won't be complete till he joins us!"

"Should I be right or wrong, Mr. Armadale, if I guessed that you were thinking of somebody?" asked a voice softly behind him.

Allan turned, and found the major's daughter at his side. Miss Milroy

(not unmindful of a certain tender interview which had taken place behind a carriage) had noticed her admirer standing thoughtfully by himself, and had determined on giving him another opportunity, while her father and young Pedgitt were at the top of the watch-tower.

"You know everything," said Allan smiling. "I was thinking of somebody."

Miss Milroy stole a glance at him—a glance of gentle encouragement. There could be but one human creature in Mr. Armadale's mind after what had passed between them that morning! It would be only an act of mercy to take him back again at once to the interrupted conversation of a few hours since on the subject of names.

"I have been thinking of somebody too," she said, half inviting, half repelling the coming avowal. "If I tell you the first letter of my Somebody's name, will you tell me the first letter of yours?"

"I will tell you anything you like," rejoined Allan with the utmost enthusiasm.

She still shrank coquettishly from the very subject that she wanted to approach. "Tell me your letter first," she said in low tones, looking away from him.

Allan laughed. "M," he said, "is my first letter."

She started a little. Strange that he should be thinking of her by her surname instead of her Christian name—but it mattered little as long as he was thinking of her.

"What is your letter?" asked Allan.

She blushed and smiled. "A—if you will have it!" she answered in a reluctant little whisper. She stole another look at him, and luxuriously protracted her enjoyment of the coming avowal once more. "How many syllables is the name in?" she asked, drawing patterns shyly on the ground with the end of her parasol.

No man with the slightest knowledge of the sex would have been rash enough, in Allan's position, to tell her the truth. Allan, who knew nothing whatever of women's natures, and who told the truth right and left in all mortal emergencies, answered as if he had been under examination in a court of justice.

"It's a name in three syllables," he said.

Miss Milroy's downcast eyes flashed up at him like lightning. "Three!" she repeated in the blankest astonishment.

Allan was too inveterately straightforward to take the warning even now. "I'm not strong at my spelling, I know," he said, with his light-hearted laugh. "But I don't think I'm wrong in calling Midwinter a name in three syllables. I was thinking of my friend—but never mind my thoughts. Tell me who A is—tell me who you were thinking of?"

"Of the first letter of the alphabet, Mr. Armadale, and I beg positively to inform you of nothing more!"

With that annihilating answer the major's daughter put up her parasol and walked back by herself to the boat.

Allan stood petrified with amazement. If Miss Milroy had actually boxed his ears (and there is no denying that she had privately longed to devote her hand to that purpose) he could hardly have felt more bewildered than he felt now. "What on earth have I done?" he asked himself helplessly, as the major and young Pedgiff joined him, and the three walked down together to the waterside. "I wonder what she'll say to me next?"

She said absolutely nothing—she never so much as looked at Allan when he took his place in the boat. There she sat, with her eyes and her complexion both much brighter than usual, taking the deepest interest in the curate's progress towards recovery; in the state of Mrs. Pentecost's spirits; in Pedgiff Junior (for whom she ostentatiously made room enough to let him sit beside her); in the scenery and the reed-cutter's cottage; in everybody and everything but Allan—whom she would have married with the greatest pleasure five minutes since. "I'll never forgive him," thought the major's daughter. "To be thinking of that ill-bred wretch when I was thinking of *him*—and to make me all but confess it before I found him out! Thank heaven Mr. Pedgiff is in the boat!"

In this frame of mind Miss Neelie applied herself forthwith to the fascination of Pedgiff and the discomfiture of Allan. "Oh, Mr. Pedgiff, how extremely clever and kind of you to think of showing us that sweet cottage! Lonely, Mr. Armadale? I don't think it's lonely at all; I should like of all things to live there. What would this picnic have been without you, Mr. Pedgiff; you can't think how I have enjoyed it since we got into the boat. Cool, Mr. Armadale? What can you possibly mean by saying it's cool; it's the warmest evening we've had this summer. And the music, Mr. Pedgiff; how nice it was of you to bring your concertina! I wonder if I could accompany you on the piano? I should so like to try. Oh, yes, Mr. Armadale, no doubt you meant to do something musical too, and I daresay you sing very well when you know the words; but, to tell you the truth, I always did, and always shall hate Moore's Melodies!"

Thus, with merciless dexterity of manipulation, did Miss Milroy work that sharpest female weapon of offence, the tongue—and thus she would have used it for some time longer, if Allan had only shown the necessary jealousy, or if Pedgiff had only afforded the necessary encouragement. But adverse fortune had decreed that she should select for her victims two men essentially unassassable under existing circumstances. Allan was too innocent of all knowledge of female subtleties and susceptibilities to understand anything, except that the charming Neelie was unreasonably out of temper with him without the slightest cause. The wary Pedgiff, as became one of the quick-witted youth of the present generation, submitted to female influence, with his eye fixed immovably all the time on his own interests. Many a young man of the past generation, who was no fool, has sacrificed everything for love. Not one young man in ten thousand of the present generation, except the fools, has ever

ficed a halfpenny. The daughters of Eve still inherit their mother's merits, and commit their mother's faults. But the sons of Adam, in these latter days, are men who would have handed the famous apple back with a bow, and a "Thanks, no ; it might get me into a scrape." When Allan—surprised and disappointed—moved away out of Miss Milroy's reach to the forward part of the boat, Pedgilt Junior rose and followed him. "You're a very nice girl," thought this shrewd and sensible young man ; "but a client's a client—and I am sorry to inform you, Miss, it won't do." He set himself at once to rouse Allan's spirits by diverting his attention to a new subject. There was to be a regatta that autumn on one of the Broads, and his client's opinion as a yachtsman might be valuable to the committee. "Something new I should think to you, sir, in a sailing-match on fresh water ?" he said in his most ingratiatory manner. And Allan, instantly interested, answered, "Quite new. Do tell me about it !"

As for the rest of the party, at the other end of the boat, they were in a fair way to confirm Mrs. Pentecost's doubts whether the hilarity of the picnic would last the day out. Poor Neelie's natural feeling of irritation under the disappointment which Allan's awkwardness had inflicted on her, was now exasperated into silent and settled resentment by her own keen sense of humiliation and defeat. The major had relapsed into his habitually dreamy, absent manner ; his mind was turning monotonously with the wheels of his clock. The curate still secluded his indigestion from public view in the innermost recesses of the cabin ; and the curate's mother, with a second dose ready at a moment's notice, sat on guard at the door. Women of Mrs. Pentecost's age and character generally enjoy their own bad spirits. "This," sighed the old lady, wagging her head with a smile of sour satisfaction, "is what you call a day's pleasure, is it ? Ah, what fools we all were to leave our comfortable homes !"

Meanwhile, the boat floated smoothly along the windings of the watery labyrinth which lay between the two Broads. The view on either side was now limited to nothing but interminable rows of reeds. Not a sound was heard, far or near ; not so much as a glimpse of cultivated or inhabited land appeared anywhere. "A trifle dreary hereabouts, Mr. Armadale," said the ever-cheerful Pedgilt. "But we are just out of it now. Look ahead, sir ! Here we are at Hurle Mere."

The reeds opened back on the right hand and the left, and the boat glided suddenly into the wide circle of a pool. Round the nearer half of the circle, the eternal reeds still fringed the margin of the water. Round the farther half, the land appeared again—here, rolling back from the pool in desolate sand-hills ; there, rising above it in a sweep of grassy shore. At one point, the ground was occupied by a plantation ; and, at another, by the outbuildings of a lonely old red-brick house, with a strip of by-road near, that skirted the garden-wall, and ended at the pool. The sun was sinking in the clear heaven, and the water, where the sun's reflection failed to tinge it, was beginning to look black and cold. The solitude that had

been soothing, the silence that had felt like an enchantment on the other Broad, in the day's vigorous prime, was a solitude that saddened here—a silence that struck cold, in the stillness and melancholy of the day's decline.

The course of the boat was directed across the Mere to a creek in the grassy shore. One or two of the little flat-bottomed punts peculiar to the Broads lay in the creek; and the reed-cutters to whom the punts belonged, surprised at the appearance of strangers, came out, staring silently, from behind an angle of the old garden-wall. Not another sign of life was visible anywhere. No pony-chaise had been seen by the reed-cutters; no stranger, either man or woman, had approached the shores of Hurle Mere that day.

Young Pedgiff took another look at his watch, and addressed himself to Miss Milroy. " You may, or may not, see the governess when you get back to Therpe-Ambrose," he said; " but, as the time stands now, you won't see her here. You know best, Mr. Armadale," he added, turning to Allan, " whether your friend is to be depended on to keep his appointment? "

" I am certain he is to be depended on," replied Allan, looking about him in un concealed disappointment at Midwinter's absence.

" Very good," pursued Pedgiff Juuior. " If we light the fire for our gipsy tea-making on the open ground there, your friend may find us out, sir, by the smoke. That's the Indian dodge for picking up a lost man on the prairie, Miss Milroy—and it's pretty nearly wild enough (isn't it?) to be a prairie here! "

There are some temptations—principally those of the smaller kind—which it is not in the defensive capacity of female human nature to resist. The temptation to direct the whole force of her influence, as the one young lady of the party, towards the instant overthrow of Allan's arrangement for meeting his friend, was too much for the major's daughter. She turned on the smiling Pedgiff with a look which ought to have overwhelmed him. But who ever overwhelmed a solicitor?

" I think it's the most lonesome, dreary, hideous place I ever saw in my life!" said Miss Nealie. " If you insist on making tea here, Mr. Pedgiff, don't make any for me. No! I shall stop in the boat; and though I am absolutely dying with thirst, I shall touch nothing till we get back again to the other Broad! "

The major opened his lips to remonstrate. To his daughter's infinite delight, Mrs. Pentecost rose from her seat, before he could say a word, and, after surveying the whole landward prospect, and seeing nothing in the shape of a vehicle anywhere, asked indignantly whether they were going all the way back again to the place where they had left the carriages in the middle of the day. On ascertaining that this was, in fact, the arrangement proposed; and that, from the nature of the country, the carriages could not have been ordered round to Marie Mere without, in the first instance, sending them the whole of the way back to Thorpe-

Ambrose, Mrs. Pentecost (speaking in her son's interests) instantly declared that no earthly power should induce her to be out on the water after dark. "Call me a boat!" cried the old lady, in great agitation. "Wherever there's water, there's a night mist, and wherever there's a night mist, my son Samuel catches cold. Don't talk to *me* about your moonlight and your tea-making—you're all mad! Hi! you two men there!" cried Mrs. Pentecost, hailing the silent reed-cutters on shore. "Sixpence a-piece for you, if you'll take me and my son back in your boat!"

Before young Pedgiff could interfere, Allan himself settled the difficulty this time, with perfect patience and good temper.

"I can't think, Mrs. Pentecost, of your going back in any boat but the boat you have come out in," he said. "There is not the least need (as you and Miss Milroy don't like the place) for anybody to go on shore here, but me. I *must* go on shore. My friend Midwinter never broke his promise to me yet; and I can't consent to leave Hurle Mere, as long as there is a chance of his keeping his appointment. But there's not the least reason in the world why I should stand in the way on that account. You have the major and Mr. Pedgiff to take care of you; and you can get back to the carriages before dark, if you go at once. I will wait here, and give my friend half-an-hour more—and then I can follow you in one of the reed-cutters' boats."

"That's the most sensible thing, Mr. Armadale, you've said to-day," remarked Mrs. Pentecost, seating herself again in a violent hurry. "Tell them to be quick!" cried the old lady, shaking her fist at the boatmen. "Tell them to be quick!"

Allan gave the necessary directions, and stepped on shore. The wary Pedgiff (sticking fast to his client,) tried to follow.

"We can't leave you here alone, sir," he said, protesting eagerly in a whisper. "Let the major take care of the ladies, and let me keep you company at the Mere."

"No, no!" said Allan, pressing him back. "They're all in low spirits on board. If you want to be of service to me, stop like a good fellow where you are, and do your best to keep the thing going."

He waved his hand, and the men pushed the boat off from the shore. The others all waved their hands in return except the major's daughter, who sat apart from the rest, with her face hidden under her parasol. The tears stood thick in Neelie's eyes. Her last angry feeling against Allan died out, and her heart went back to him penitently, the moment he left the boat. "How good he is to us all!" she thought, "and what a wretch I am!" She got up with every generous impulse in her nature urging her to make atonement to him. She got up, reckless of appearances, and looked after him with eager eyes and flushed cheeks, as he stood alone on the shore. "Don't be long, Mr. Armadale!" she said, with a desperate disregard of what the rest of the company thought of her.

The boat was already far out in the water, and with all Neelie's resolution, the words were spoken in a faint little voice, which failed to reach Allan's ears. The one sound he heard, as the boat gained the opposite extremity of the Mere, and disappeared slowly among the reeds, was the sound of the concertina. The indefatigable Pedgiff was keeping things going—evidently under the auspices of Mrs. Pentecost—by performing a sacred melody.

Left by himself, Allan lit a cigar, and took a turn backwards and forwards on the shore. "She might have said a word to me at parting!" he thought. "I've done everything for the best; I've as good as told her how fond of her I am, and this is the way she treats me!" He stopped, and stood looking absently at the sinking sun, and the fast-darkening waters of the Mere. Some inscrutable influence in the scene forced its way stealthily into his mind, and diverted his thoughts from Miss Milroy to his absent friend. He started, and looked about him.

The reed-cutters had gone back to their retreat behind the angle of the wall, not a living creature was visible, not a sound rose anywhere along the dreary shore. Even Allan's spirits began to get depressed. It was nearly an hour after the time when Midwinter had promised to be at Hurle Mere. He had himself arranged to walk to the pool (with a stable-boy from Thorpe-Ambrose, as his guide), by lanes and footpaths which shortened the distance by the road. The boy knew the country well, and Midwinter was habitually punctual at all his appointments. Had anything gone wrong at Thorpe-Ambrose? Had some accident happened on the way? Determined to remain no longer doubting and idling by himself, Allan made up his mind to walk inland from the Mere, on the chance of meeting his friend. He went round at once to the angle in the wall, and asked one of the reed-cutters to show him the footpath to Thorpe-Ambrose.

The man led him away from the road, and pointed to a barely-perceptible break in the outer trees of the plantation. After pausing for one more useless look round him, Allan turned his back on the Mere, and made for the trees.

For a few paces, the path ran straight through the plantation. Thence it took a sudden turn—and the water and the open country became both lost to view. Allan steadily followed the grassy track before him, seeing nothing and hearing nothing, until he came to another winding of the path. Turning in the new direction, he saw dimly a human figure sitting alone at the foot of one of the trees. Two steps nearer were enough to make the figure familiar to him. "Midwinter!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "This is not the place where I was to meet you! What are you waiting for here?"

Midwinter rose, without answering. The evening dimness among the trees, which obscured his face, made his silence doubly perplexing.

Allan went on eagerly questioning him. "Did you come here by yourself?" he asked. "I thought the boy was to guide you?"

This time Midwinter answered. "When we got as far as these trees," he said, "I sent the boy back. He told me I was close to the place, and couldn't miss it."

"What made you stop here, when he left you?" reiterated Allan. "Why didn't you walk on?"

"Don't despise me," answered the other, "I hadn't the courage!"

"Not the courage?" repeated Allan. He paused a moment. "Oh, I know!" he resumed, putting his hand gaily on Midwinter's shoulder. "You're still shy of the Milroys. What nonsense, when I told you myself that your peace was made at the cottage!"

"I wasn't thinking, Allan, of your friends at the cottage. The truth is, I'm hardly myself to-day. I am ill and unnerved; trifles startle me." He stopped, and shrank away, under the anxious scrutiny of Allan's eyes. "If you *will* have it," he burst out abruptly, "the horror of that night on board the Wreck has got me again; there's a dreadful oppression on my head; there's a dreadful sinking at my heart—I am afraid of something happening to us, if we don't part before the day is out. I can't break my promise to you; for God's sake, release me from it, and let me go back?"

Remonstrance, to any one who knew Midwinter, was plainly useless at that moment. Allan humoured him. "Come out of this dark airless place," he said; "and we'll talk about it. The water and the open sky are within a stone's throw of us. I hate a wood in the evening—it even gives *me* the horrors. You have been working too hard over the steward's books. Come and breathe freely in the blessed open air."

Midwinter stopped, considered for a moment, and suddenly submitted.

"You're right," he said, "and I'm wrong, as usual. I'm wasting time and distressing you to no purpose. What folly to ask you to let me go back! Suppose you had said yes?"

"Well?" asked Allan.

"Well," repeated Midwinter, "something would have happened at the first step to stop me—that's all. Come on."

They walked together in silence on the way to the Mere.

At the last turn in the path Allan's cigar went out. While he stopped to light it again, Midwinter walked on before him, and was the first to come in sight of the open ground.

Allan had just kindled the match, when, to his surprise, his friend came back to him round the turn in the path. There was light enough to show objects more clearly in this part of the plantation. The match, as Midwinter faced him, dropped on the instant from Allan's hand.

"Good God!" he cried, starting back, "you look as you looked on board the Wreck!"

Midwinter held up his hand for silence. He spoke with his wild eyes riveted on Allan's face, with his white lips close at Allan's ear.

"You remember how I looked," he answered, in a whisper. "Do

you remember what I *said*, when you and the doctor were talking of the Dream?"

"I have forgotten the Dream," said Allan.

As he made that answer, Midwinter took his hand, and led him round the last turn in the path.

"Do you remember it now?" he asked, and pointed to the Mere.

The sun was sinking in the cloudless westward heaven. The water of the Mere lay beneath, tinged red by the dying light. The open country stretched away, darkening drearily already on the right hand and the left. And on the near margin of the pool, where all had been solitude before, there now stood, fronting the sunset, the figure of a Woman.

The two Armadales stood together in silence, and looked at the lonely figure and the dreary view.

Midwinter was the first to speak.

"Your own eyes have seen it," he said. "Now look at your own words."

He opened the narrative of the Dream, and held it under Allan's eye. His finger pointed to the lines which recorded the first Vision; his voice sinking lower and lower, repeated the words:—

"The sense came to me of being left alone in the darkness.

"I waited.

"The darkness opened and showed me the vision—as in a picture—of a broad, lonely pool, surrounded by open ground. Above the farther margin of the pool I saw the cloudless western sky, red with the light sunset.

"On the near margin of the pool there stood the Shadow of Woman."

He ceased, and let the hand which held the manuscript drop to his side. The other hand pointed to the lonely figure, standing with its back turned on them, fronting the setting sun.

"There," he said, "stands the living Woman, in the Shadow's place! There speaks the first of the dream-warnings to you and to me! Let the future time find us still together—and the second figure that stands in the Shadow's place will be Mine."

Even Allan was silenced by the terrible certainty of conviction with which he spoke.

In the pause that followed, the figure at the pool moved, and walked slowly away round the margin of the shore. Allan stepped out beyond the last of the trees, and gained a wider view of the open ground. The first object that met his eyes was the pony-chaise from Thorpe-Ambrose.

He turned back to Midwinter with a laugh of relief. "What nonsense have you been talking!" he said. "And what nonsense have I been listening to! It's the governess at last."

Midwinter made no reply. Allan took him by the arm, and tried to lead him on. He released himself suddenly, and seized Allan with both hands—holding him back from the figure at the pool, as he had held

him back from the cabin-door on the deck of the timber-ship. Once again, the effort was in vain. Once again, Allan broke away as easily as he had broken away in the past time.

"One of us must speak to her," he said. "And if you won't, I will."

He had only advanced a few steps towards the Mere, when he heard, or thought he heard, a voice faintly calling after him, once and once only, the word Farewell. He stopped, with a feeling of uneasy surprise, and looked round.

"Was that you, Midwinter?" he asked.

There was no answer. After hesitating a moment more, Allan returned to the plantation. Midwinter was gone.

He looked back at the pool; doubtful in the new emergency, what to do next. The lonely figure had altered its course in the interval: it had turned and was advancing towards the trees. Allan had been evidently either heard or seen. It was impossible to leave a woman unbefriended in that helpless position and in that solitary place. For the second time Allan went out from the trees to meet her.

As he came within sight of her face, he stopped in ungovernable astonishment. The sudden revelation of her beauty, as she smiled and looked at him inquiringly, suspended the movement in his limbs and the words on his lips. A vague doubt beset him whether it was the governess, after all.

He roused himself; and, advancing a few paces, mentioned his name. "May I ask," he added, "if I have the pleasure——?"

The lady met him easily and gracefully half way.

"Major Milroy's governess," she said. "Miss Gwilt."



Confession.

THERE are three uses of the word *confession* familiar to us in daily life, and which have penetrated the history and literature of all times. They may be distinguished by the terms biographical, theological, and juridical. In a select number of instances, where the history of his life seems to have been extorted from the writer of it in defiance either of his own apparent interests, his natural reticence, or of the inherent privacy and solemnity attaching to the matter disclosed, the resulting story has been named by the writer, or his readers, a *confession*. Some such account may be given of the personal memoirs of Augustine, Rousseau, De Quincey, Coleridge, and, not least even among such names as these, Francis Newman. Again, there is the theological type of *confession*, such as is recognized in the Church of England, and forms so prominent a feature in the discipline of the Church of Rome. In this sense, the word is associated with many a bitter feeling of suspicion and animosity, though to some it may be redolent with holy memories of a relieved conscience, decided doubts, and forgiven sin. Lastly, there is a third use of the term *confession*, which alone of the three will form the subject of the present article. It is well known that in that saddest department of our political activity which relates to the investigation of crime, the confession of the criminal, judicial or extra-judicial, intentional or unintentional, is a source of information on which we are constantly called upon to rely. And even in those cases turning on the proper evaluation of circumstantial evidence, and where the proof of guilt is considered such as to be abundantly satisfactory to prudent men reasoning as they would "upon their own most important affairs," yet the subsequent confession of the prisoner is universally held to be a matter of some moment, and capable of affording much relief to the public mind. The significance of confession in this last juridical sense may be enforced by reference to very recent cases in the criminal records of the country. The case of Franz Müller threatened to become a matter of international solicitude. He is said to have become the hero of a popular drama in Austria, presenting an outrageous parody on the judicial system of England. Never, perhaps, in the whole history of the case, from the first announcement of the violent death of Mr. Briggs in the train to the last moment of the criminal's life, did the whole tragic features of the narrative culminate higher than when the German *confessor* put the question to the prisoner just hovering between life and death, "As within a few moments you shall stand in the presence of your God, did you do the deed?" The answer was, "I did it." There were that day few reasoners on the value of evidence stern enough not to experience a sense of additional security at receiving news of the confession.

Again, in the more recent case of Pelizzoni, where the system of English judicature certainly was not exhibited to the best advantage in the eyes of the many foreigners who naturally watched it, all the mystery and entanglement that grew about it as it proceeded was due to the voluntary confession of Gregorio Mogni. There were three trials before as many juries. At the first, a man, Pelizzoni, is convicted of murdering another man, Harrington, by evidence carrying complete satisfaction to the minds of judge and jury. At a second trial, a man, Gregorio Mogni, is produced and indicted, not for murdering, but for "killing and slaying feloniously" the same man, Harrington, and Pelizzoni is brought forward as a witness, the principal evidence in this case being the *confession* of Gregorio, which went to exculpate Pelizzoni entirely. Gregorio is convicted, and Pelizzoni thereby implicitly absolved. Pelizzoni is then tried for the manslaughter of another man at the same time and place, and acquitted.

We may also notice the case of the man Wright who was executed shortly after Townley's reprieve. It will be remembered that Wright pleaded guilty: the circumstances of the case were not strictly investigated, at least with that rigorous pertinacity which belongs to a public defence, and he was executed amid no small dissatisfaction. This case will serve to illustrate some remarks we shall have to make later on the proper treatment of voluntary statements.

Lastly, there is a most afflicting case still *sub judice*, and about which it does not become us as yet directly to speak. The circumstances, however, are notorious; and there never was a case waiting trial as to which a graver duty was imposed on all men and all women, of understanding whereof they affirm. It is a case which, for many reasons, touches us nearer than the feats of the common assassin.

Of all the incidents that belong to this distressing case, of course the most prominent one is the legal operation of a voluntary judicial confession. It may tend in some way to temper our thoughts and control our tongues if we briefly examine (1) the actual effect of such a confession by English law, with all its limitations and restrictions; and (2) the rational groundwork of such effect, so far as it is justified by reason and the laws of the human mind.

It may first be observed that whereas the plea of "Not guilty" only goes to assert that the evidence is not sufficient to convict, and, though popularly, is not legally held to be an absolute denial of the offence, yet the plea of "Guilty" is treated as an unlimited confession. There is in this case no trial, no defence, and sentence and execution follow as of course; in default, at least, of pardon from the Crown. It is to the credit of English law that it does not lean to or encourage confessions. Where any inducement whatever has been held out by a constable, magistrate, parent, master, or mistress, to make a confession, such as by saying, "It will be better for you to speak the truth," "It is no use for you to deny it, for there are the man and boy who saw you do it," or, "I only want my money, and if you give me that, you may go to the devil" (Taylor's

Ev.), evidence of the confession is wholly excluded. It is, however, important to observe that the inducement held out in order to exclude the evidence must have reference to escape from the criminal charge. It is, therefore, laid down in the books that if a clergyman, by spiritual exhortations, induces a person to confess his guilt, evidence of such confession is admitted. It must, however, be remembered that if at the trial the prisoner pleads "Not guilty," it will be open for him or his counsel to comment on the nature of the inducement held out, even to the extent of showing that it was such as to extort a series of untruths. This species of evidence has been held by some judges as the highest and most satisfactory evidence of guilt, as "it is presumed to flow from the highest sense of guilt;" and Chief Baron-Gilbert observed that "the voluntary confession of the party in interest is reckoned the best evidence; for if a man swearing for his interest can give no credit, he must certainly give most credit when he swears against it."

Such is a brief account of the view the law of England takes of a judicial confession. It cautiously scrutinizes the terms of such confession and the manner in which it was obtained, and when the confession has resisted this test and stands forth relieved from all suspicion, then the law attaches to it the highest possible value. There is good ground for the rule of exclusion by reason of inducement over and above the uncertainty it imparts to the truth of the confession itself. If the least encouragement were given to the subordinate officers of police to extract evidence from accused persons, or rather if these officers were not strongly discouraged by the practical and legal abortiveness of all such efforts, they would, while seeking to obtain a character for activity and zeal, be unceasingly led to harass and oppress unfortunate prisoners in the hope of wringing from them a reluctant confession. It is on this system of extorting reluctant confessions that the whole Continental system of police is founded. We read with horror of cases where persons have confessed to serious crimes with a view to escape the examinations, hardship, cruel tauntings, and lengthened imprisonment which their obstinate professions of innocence involved. It was on this notion that the whole system of torture was constructed. It has been noted by Bentham how successful was this method in obtaining confessions of crimes we now regard as impossible.—such as witchcraft. "Turn which way we will,—to France, to England, to North America,—we shall find wretched women not only convicted, but confessing themselves guilty of that imaginary crime. In these deplorable instances, in what stage has the confession been conceived? To produce a frantic cry of guilty,—to produce the mark of a trembling hand to a paper full of calumnious lies, contents known or unknown,—these are effects to the production of which confusion of mind may be fully adequate, in the instance of the weakest and most ignorant certainly not less than in that of the strongest and best-informed minds."

In this connection it is interesting to observe, to the honour, or not, of the Roman law as it now obtains abroad, that penitential confessions to the

priests are encouraged for the relief of the conscience, and the priest is bound to secrecy by the peril of punishment. The actual expressions of the law are interesting and may be given in the original : "Confessio coram sacerdote in pœnitentiâ facta non probat in judicio : quia censetur facta coram Deo ; imo, si sacerdos eam enunciet, incidet in pœnam." The priest may, however, with the express consent of the penitent, testify to the substance of the confession, and in all cases may testify to the fact that a confession has been made, and penance enjoined.

The English system may be less tender to the individual criminal, but follows a more strictly logical course with a view to the interests of society and the general repression of crime. It secures as co-operating agents on its side the influence of the passions and the general laws of human nature. It assumes that in some cases the loneliness of conscious guilt may become so desolating and destructive, that the offender will run as to a city of refuge into the very arms of justice and punishment. And the law of England goes on to conclude that the certainty of punishment may operate quite as much by way of solicitation to the delivery of the conscience as by way of discouragement. And in any case, and however the truth comes out, the country must have the benefit of it. Much may be said on either view of the problem. On the one hand it is of paramount importance that every crime should be thoroughly investigated, and, all its circumstances and agents having been brought into the light of day, that the penalty assigned should inexorably follow. On the other hand, a genuine sympathy for individual frailty will distinguish cases where the personal burden of a crime has been long borne, the crime itself deeply repented of, the criminal long changed into a new man, and, the alarm and danger due to the crime having long subsided, only evil and not good can come either from dilatory punishment or from hardy and torturing concealment. Such a case was that of Eugene Aram, or rather the imaginative portrait drawn of him in such ghastly colours by Hood. He is represented as unburdening his mind thirteen years after the crime, through the medium of a dream which he related to the boys of his school. The Continental system which favours priestly confession goes eminently to relieve the individual's torment ; in some cases, it may be, at the expense of public justice. The English practice throws the greatest discouragements in the way of self-accusation, but lays hold of it as invaluable testimony in all unexceptionable cases where it presents itself.

There is a further obstacle in the way of receiving confessions without the strictest caution, which is that there are numerous cases on record of persons confessing to grave crimes of which they were entirely guiltless. Not to speak of such anomalous incidents as attend the concentration of the public mind on any morbid phenomena, and which are often manifested in the self-surrender to justice of a number of innocent but deluded persons, there are several conceivable causes which may make the confession of the most serious crime by an innocent man a strictly reasonable course. Bentham has enumerated some of these, and it is possible to illustrate nearly all of them by well-known historical incidents. We have already

alluded to the practical torture often employed abroad in the course of the preliminary examination. If it were necessary in these days to controvert the general policy of all species of torture having confession for their object, it might be enough to refer to the account of the trial of Felton for the murder of the Duke of Buckingham. The Bishop of London is related to have said to him at his trial, "If you will not confess you must go to the rack." The prisoner replied, "If it must be so, I know not whom I may accuse in the extremity of my torture,—Bishop Laud perhaps, or any lord at this board." "Sound sense," observed Sir Michael Foster, "in the mouth of an enthusiast and a ruffian."

Very often a mere love of notoriety has been known to generate confessions of the most serious crimes. In the present days of cheap newspapers, where a hundred organs of popular information are swelling the fame of every reputed criminal within a few hours of his capture or surrender, this evil is likely to be on the increase. Lord Clarendon mentions the case of a Frenchman named Hubert, who after the fire of London confessed that he had set the first house on fire, and had been hired in Paris a year before to do it. The jury found him guilty, and he was executed. It would seem in this case, that another familiar motive of self-inculpation came into play; that is, mere heart-weariness and contempt of life. For the historian adds—"Though no man could imagine any reason why a man should so desperately throw away his life, which he might have saved, though he had been guilty, since he was accused only upon his own confession, yet neither the judges, nor any present at the trial, did believe him guilty, but that he was a poor distracted wretch, weary of life, and chose to part with it in this way."

Sometimes a desire to conceal the offence of another, or to conceal some greater offence committed by themselves, or, when a false conviction seems probable, any way to propitiate the awarders of punishment and secure better terms, has been known to lead to the self-accusation of innocent persons. There is a curious case which may serve to illustrate the last of these alternatives, and which is given by Mr. Wills in his very interesting essay of *Circumstantial Evidence*. Two brothers Brown were tried in the Supreme Court of Vermont, in September, 1819, for the murder of Russell Colvin, on May 10, 1812. Colvin was the brother-in-law of the prisoners, and a person of weak, and not perfectly sound mind. He was considered burdensome to the family of the prisoners, who were obliged to support him. On the day of his disappearance, being in a distant field, where the prisoners were at work, a violent quarrel broke out between them, and one of them struck him a violent blow on the back of the head with a club, which felled him to the ground. Some suspicion that he was murdered arose at the time, which were increased by the finding of his hat in the same field a few months afterwards. In 1819, it is said, one of the neighbours having repeatedly dreamed of the murder with great minuteness, both in regard to Colvin's death and the concealment of his remains, the prisoners were accused of the murder. Upon strict search, the pocket-knife of Colvin, and a button of his clothes, were found

in an old open cellar in the same field; and in a hollow stump not many rods off, were discovered two nails, and a number of bones believed to be those of a man. The prisoners confessed to the murder, and to the concealment of the body, and were convicted and sentenced to death. On the same day they applied to the legislature for a commutation of the sentence of death to that of perpetual imprisonment; which as to one only of them was granted. The confession was now withdrawn and contradicted, and on a reward being offered for the discovery of the missing man, he was found in New Jersey, and returned home in time to prevent the execution. He had fled for fear the prisoners would kill him. The bones were those of an animal. It is added, that the prisoners had been advised by some misjudging friends that as they would certainly be convicted upon the circumstances proved, their only chance for life was by a commutation of punishment; and that this depended on their making a penitential confession, and thereupon obtaining a recommendation to mercy.

It is manifest that in the cases of all confessions, and chiefly those not made in open court, or extra-judicial, extreme caution is needed in estimating the true value of what purports to be a confession, and determining whether, in fact, it really amounts to a confession or not. So-called confessions are often made to policemen, too often not the least ignorant and prejudiced men. We are all aware of the difficulty of truly reproducing another person's words, and especially when they form part of a continuous conversation. Sometimes an entirely mistaken colouring is given to a passage or dialogue through letting slip or misapprehending some material word. Then, again, much of the meaning of what we say is imparted to the actual words by our look, tone, emphasis, pauses, and even reticence. This is difficult to represent again accurately, even for an accomplished actor, with no disturbing feelings or proclivities. It is next to impossible to represent any part of all this for the average policeman. Similar sources of error are present even in the case of so-called written confessions. The instance is in point of a paper found in the prisoner's handwriting, charging him, the prisoner, with a crime; and yet it may have been the discourse of another person, and all false. Simple curiosity, or even the intention of refuting it in a private way or with the assistance of justice, might have been his motive for copying. Bentham gives the case of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, who wrote a virulent libel, injurious to many respectable characters, Saurin's among the rest, and circulated it in manuscript. Saurin, having borrowed one of these manuscripts, copied it with his own hand, for the purpose of answering it, or instituting a prosecution on the ground of it. Rousseau, hearing of this, or suspecting it, got possession of Saurin's copy, and, with the help of some false evidence for the explanation of it, instituted a prosecution against Saurin, charging him with being the author. The truth was discovered by the *videlicet* examination of the false witnesses. Bentham is our only authority for the truth of the anecdote. Whether true or not, it equally well illustrates the subject in hand.

There is one source of misapprehension which often infects the inter-

pretation of an imagined confession, and to which, it is believed, insufficient attention is paid. Either from ignorance of law, or from an infirm capacity of verbal expression, a man will sometimes utter what in words strictly amounts to a confession, but what was never intended for such. For instance, in a trial for receiving stolen goods, the question is put by the clerk of the court:—"Prisoner at the bar, how say you, are you guilty or not guilty?" "Guilty, my lord." "You say, prisoner, you received the goods, well knowing them to have been stolen." "No, my lord, I never knew as how they were stol'n." Or take another instance from a trial for an assault with intent to murder, or with intent to do grievous bodily harm—a prisoner will plead guilty, and, on being warned of the full and actual character of the whole offence, he will often enough shrink back in horror from the imputation, saying some such words as, "Not I, my lord, I never went to hurt a hair of his head." The same limitation applies to confessions, either written or spoken, out of court. It is quite conceivable a person insufficiently informed of the rather subtle definition of less "murder" and the term "malice aforethought," might confess to having "murdered" another, merely meaning that it was his hand that struck the blow. That it was a maniacal act isolated from the state of mind before and afterwards, that it was the result of mere accident, or done in self-defence, that it was done in a state of sleep-walking, or partial obscuration of sense, or of intoxication, or violent mental provocation, would not seem to such a person relevant to the description of the act of crime. And these elements would appear less relevant, the more susceptible was the conscience of the person confessing and the more deeply imbued with remorse. That he was the immediate cause of the other's death makes him, in his own eyes, now purged and steadied, the murderer, and for him, in his new-born agony of repentance, the mere suggestion of the above modifications would savour of disingenuous sophistry and chicanery. Such a person might draw even a morbid pleasure from the self-chastisement involved in the very bareness of the confession and the exaggeration of the crime. The only corrective to any error that may be encountered on this ground in the use of confession is by a very careful examination (where that is allowed) of the person confessing, "at the least, by a detailed explanation to him of the legal crime confessed to, and the exact legal bearing of the terms of the confession. In addition to this, so anomalous is the condition of a person voluntarily seeking vengeance of the law, that stringent inquiry must be made as to the physiological and medical circumstances of the prisoner, both at the time of the crime and the time of the confession, and as to any influences from without that may have in anywise operated to distort his mind. These cautions are, above all things, applicable in the present day, when nervous phenomena are constantly cropping up of a startling and perplexing character, and when the almost epidemic irritability of the nervous system peculiarly exposes the feeble and sensitive to the influence of religious guides not always quite discreet.

Bentham has given two tests which are at all times applicable in the

process of duly estimating a voluntary confession. The first is, that "to operate in the character of direct evidence confession cannot be too *particular*." The value and ground of this touchstone of confession is that, in every case, a certain number of facts are established by evidence independent of the confession. Such facts should be multiplied as much as possible, even where in themselves they are not criminating nor directly and obviously material. Thus, the more the terms of the confession are distributed into minute and definite assertions, the greater possibility is afforded of confronting them with circumstances the truth of which is placed beyond dispute. There is a good old legal motto, which is very applicable here, *Latet dolus in generalibus*. This method of testing a confession is obviously of conspicuous efficacy where the self-accused is the victim of mere hallucination, frenzy, or diseased fancy. Dreams may have become confused with waking thoughts, fears may have become self-realized, actual events may have assumed wild and disproportionate greatness, and all may result in a suicidal impulse of self-sacrifice and self-condemnation. "The greater the particularity required on the part of the confession, the greater is the care taken of the confessionalist,—the greater the care taken to guard him against undue conviction, brought on him by his own imbecility and imprudence," or, we may add, by an unhealthy and predominant spirit of self-destruction. Among other obvious instances that might be given of the importance of applying in every case the crucial test of particularity, the melancholy history of witchcraft might easily supply some of the most significant. A miserable and ignorant wretch is reduced by torture to confess to having had communion with some supernatural being. If so, this singular and wholly irregular event must have been situated between some definite and cognizable periods of time, whether of hours or days, and must have been localized in some assignable place. Name those times and name that place. Again, there must have been some means of communication, some distinct and more or less intelligible language, signs, or acts. Let each or all of these be interpreted into words used by men and women on earth and told to us precisely. Say how the interview began, how it ended; what preceded it in your own conduct and what followed it; how often such a favour or dis-favour was vouchsafed to you, whether or not always in the same degree.

Now in the case of criminal procedure, the English law does not admit of the examination or rather cross-examination of the accused. Considering that the prisoner is here treated as a hostile witness against himself, this exemption is somewhat unreasonable. The notion rightly transudes the whole system of administrative justice in England that no *ex parte* statement is worth a rush without cross-examination upon it. That is to say, that words possess so admirable a faculty (whether innate or acquired) of concealing thought, and that it is so possible to broach a falsehood by stating part of the truth, or understating or overstating or slightly distorting the whole truth, that unless the utterer of a speech in his own interest or for his own purposes is compelled by

question and answer ruthlessly applied and extorted to explain to the full every word he uses, his speech just goes for nothing. The only exception to this necessary rule and invaluable principle is where a person may suffer the last penalty of the law on his own simple and uncontested statement. It is no doubt true that in practice justice is so far mercifully administered in England that in all such cases every precaution in the way of extra-judicial inquiry is in fact made, and every explanation and warning is afforded to the self-accused. It is, however, not unimportant to remember that the sifting mechanism of a rigid personal cross-examination of the only witness is out of use here, and in some cases it may be the only means of ascertaining the actual truth.

We need not dwell long upon Bentham's second test, as it is included in the first, and we have in some degree anticipated what might have been said in reference to it. This test is that "in respect of all material facts (especially the act which constitutes the physical part of the offence), the confession ought to comprehend a particular designation in respect of the circumstances of *time and places*." The reason of this rule is obvious, namely, in order that the allegations on these heads may be confronted with other known facts in the case. In some cases the hour, in others the day, will be relevant. In some cases the actual house, in others the town or even the country will come within the required minuteness. If by well-established facts it is known a man was in France, he could not have committed an offence at the same time in England. If a stack was set on fire at twelve o'clock at night and not before, at Blackacre farm, it could not have been set on fire by A., who, at half-past twelve, is sitting in the kitchen at Whiteacre farm, fourteen miles distant from Blackacre. This instance is not inapposite to the subject in hand, as there is no offence in which occur so many incalculable anomalies in the way of recklessness, self-surrender, and confessions, as in the offence of arson.

We have now examined the actual bearings of the law of England upon the method of imputing criminality implied in the word Confession. We have further considered how far the law is grounded on justice and reason, and have ventured to make a few practical suggestions affecting either its amendment or the manner of most prudently administering it. It was lately announced in a trial of no ordinary importance, and on the part of the oldest and not least able and experienced of English judges, that, with a view to the due discharge of their functions, the jury were not in a worse position, but in a better, for the previous discussion of the case by the public press. This proposition, even when backed by such an authority, will be looked upon by many of the stoutest supporters of the right of free debate as something more than questionable. Much may be said both ways, as much has been said. Thus much at least may be determined, that so far as the fluctuating opinion of the general public does operate at all on the administration of justice, the result will be more certain, steady and beneficent, for the widest possible diffusion of accurate information on the subject in hand.

Provincialism.

THE increasing frequency of the use of the words "provincial" and "provincialism" in our popular literature, points to the gradual accomplishment of several changes well worthy of recognition and discussion. When Mr. Disraeli in one of his novels talks of a certain very stale simile as being avoided "even by provincial rhetoric," he suggests the exact questions which it is the object of this paper to answer. Is there such a thing as a provincial mind, and what are its characteristic features? How does provincialism differ from other and higher standards of thought and manners? And is its increasing distinctiveness of type a satisfactory symptom or otherwise? Here are social inquiries which it would require an immense deal of observation to enable a critic to *exhaust*; but which may be briefly touched on, perhaps, not without profit and amusement.

It is only fair to say—to begin with—that there is something distasteful to Englishmen about a word which, like "provincialism," implies by its very existence a certain disparagement of all life but the life of the capital. We form the word from the language of a people whose social and political conditions were unlike our own, and most unlike them in some points on which we chiefly pride ourselves. The politics of the Romans were based on cities; and their history is mainly the history of the growth of one great city, and the spread of its superiority over Italy and the world. Rome was recruited from all quarters, but it put its own stamp on every element which it acquired. The urban standard became the standard of culture and civilization; and the very languages, poetry, and customs of the country outside were allowed to become obsolete and die away in an obscurity very troublesome to modern inquirers. But the state of things with us has been widely different. Towns have played a great part in our history, but the first foundations of our constitution were territorial; and London, great and conspicuous as it has always been, has only had a share, though a large one, in the foundation of the empire. Not London, but a plain in Berkshire, witnessed the birth of Magna Charta. Famous Parliaments have been held at Winchester, Gloucester, Northampton, Oxford. Even Westminster Abbey (and Westminster of course, though practically now absorbed in the metropolis, has a distinct place in history) is without the tombs of such men as Shakespeare and Bacon, and of several of our greatest early kings. To this day, while London continues to absorb more and more of the life of the nation, the very word *counties* retains a dignity which the word *provinces* lacks. There is a fine historical smack about it, recalling

Hampden and Cromwell, Cavaliers and Ironsides. And our chief families, though passing such an important part of their lives in London, have never come to regard their lands as mere property. A Roman noble had many villas, but his chief greatness was at Rome. The chief greatness of an English noble is in his county. There he brings his bride to his ancestral home, and there he generally lays his bones with those of his ancestors, in the church containing the brasses of the best men of his line, or in a mausoleum itself buried among hereditary woods. The county feeling which made Speke proud of being a Somersetshire man, which makes a Devonshire man glory in Raleigh, a Northumberland man in Collingwood, and a Norfolk man in Nelson, is not provincialism. It may, and often does, co-exist with all the culture of capitals, and the widest experience of travel and life. We may note, too, as a set-off to the effect of railways in helping to swell the bulk of the metropolis, that if they bring the country into London, they also carry London into the country. The Londoner sees more of his own county and other counties than he used to do, and cockneyism diminishes from the same causes which diminish the rusticity of the provincial. We must always distinguish, however, between the Londoner and the cockney proper, as we distinguish between the country gentleman, or the accomplished man of the world of our chief country towns, and the provincial proper. Provincialism, in fact, may be defined as the counterpart of cockneyism,—as the cockneyism of country towns. For every city has its own cockneys. There are Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Dublin cockneys, just as London produces the typical breed from which they all derive the name. The *local man*, the man all whose prejudices are bred in him by the place, and who measures everything by the place's standard, is and must ever be a cockney, whether he lives in London, Boston, New York, Rome, or Constantinople. No one was more severe on cockneys than Professor Wilson,—and no one created more. He educated a batch of Edinburgh cockneys, who positively rioted in provincial ideas. They thought that every London man talked of h'objets and the h'atmosphere—held on by the mane of a horse—and was sea-sick in the finest weather. It is said that disciples of the school still exist, but the brains of the school having died with its founder, they are only known to those whom the accidents of life have put in the way of studying provincial oddities. On the other hand Sir William Hamilton was a very good specimen of the first-rate intellectual man not living at the head-quarters of intellect. With the keenest historical—he had none of the properly provincial character. So far from deifying the state of things in which he lived, he criticised and did his best to improve it. The age was past in which he could be thoroughly national; but at least he was never merely local. Accordingly his influence is felt, whether men accept his philosophy or not, in London as at Oxford and Paris; whereas much that Wilson wrote is uninteresting to people on the south of the Tweed, and is becoming obsolete as concerns the world at large.

There is something melancholy in contemplating the gradual decay of independent centres of intellect; in seeing what were once suns, though not of the greatest size, becoming mere satellites. The change is common to all countries. Paris was earlier, no doubt, than London, in asserting a thorough intellectual sway over the provinces. But even far on in the last century, the French provincial cities were the seats of a brilliant intellectual life. What fine old libraries there are in the fine old Norman towns; and how rich Normandy is in archaeological literature illustrative of its past! How pleasant to see in the library of Caen, the portraits of the great men—Corneille and Malherbe among many others—whom the ancient dukedom glories in having produced! What a high notion do the admirable letters from Italy of Charles de Brosses give of the circle at Dijon, for whom they were written some hundred and twenty years ago! But so it was among ourselves. England had a score of little capitals—capitals in miniature—instead of a single big one. York was a capital for the North; Shrewsbury for Wales and some of the Midland counties; Bath and Exeter for the West. Families of gentle blood and good manners made such towns their head-quarters; and if they visited London, did it as they would now visit Rome. There were Bath wits, and Dublin orators, and Edinburgh philosophers, famous all over the empire. A great scholar, like Dawes, was not to be found at the universities only, but at the head of the Newcastle Grammar School, squabbling with the corporation, and teaching his pupils when they came to the Greek word for "ass" to translate it "alderman." Every region had its "characters," its "humourists"—not mere oddities and rustics, but men who were good gentlemen, and often of sound wit and learning. London did not drain the intellectual life of the nation on the same scale; but a Roscoe seemed in his natural place at Liverpool, and a Scott at Edinburgh. A man of the country then differed from a London man in a way rather laudable than otherwise. He had a stamp of his own about him, an originality which compensated, and often more than compensated, for his disadvantages. Provincialism is the *residuum* which remains after the course of events has drawn the ablest local men away. Provincial manners are the manners of a local aristocracy, which is not the historical local aristocracy of a former age. Provincial politics are the politics of men who know nothing of any other. Provincial wit and literature are the wit and literature of those who, if they had more of both, would carry them to a better market, but who have just enough to make themselves distinguished where they are. Altogether, these phenomena present an amusing field of observation to persons whose experience has been different, when they first enter on the study of the provincial mind.

The provincial mind makes its earliest impression on an observer by the intensity of its local feeling. He finds a sense of citizenship coming over him which the illimitable life of a capital does not admit of. Everybody seems to know everything about everybody, and to dwell on details which are of no interest or importance. If a Paddingtonian has become

famous in London as a painter, poet, or in any other way, Pedlington positively hugs the fact that his father was an innkeeper, or baker, or what not ; and the local aristocracy (whose families gave up those degrading pursuits a whole century ago) are much less likely to be cordial to him than a Devereux or a Clinton. We remember a provincial clergyman who hardly ever had a chat with you without mentioning the fact that his pew-opener was the aunt of another clergyman in the town. At a certain stage of his gossip you instinctively felt that the anecdote was coming. “ *Apropos* of the class of men who are taking orders now,” he would say, “ there’s a curious fact about my pew-opener. You know Blobsby of St. Quintin’s ? ” And so he went on. Now, this sort of gossip, it is to be feared, is relished everywhere ; but there is something essentially provincial in making much of it. And we can easily see how the habit comes to be formed. The eyes of a provincial town are habitually fixed on a few people, and as a few people are soon exhausted, the interesting facts about them are frequently repeated. A new-comer hears the same anecdotes of the local celebrities, over and over again, wherever he goes. “ Silkyton was a Radical, sir, at the time of the Reform Bill,” says a Tory with whom Silkyton now acts. “ I remember Gutter in an apron.” “ These Gubbinuses, our chief booksellers, kept a stall in my father’s days near the Independent Chapel,” &c. Such close scrutiny as goes on within the narrow compass of provincial towns, more than anything else drives men away from them. Even the great lord of the neighbourhood is glad to escape to London, out of range of the telescopes pointed at his castle. And in some places anything like heretical or peculiar opinions would make a man’s life miserable. He would be preached at from pulpits, and stared at in the streets. In London not a thousandth part of the population knows even the Prince of Wales, or the Prime Minister, by sight. If Rénan was to play at leap-frog with Bishop Colenso, on Hampstead Heath, it would excite little curiosity after the first few minutes. But the provincial mind is very personal; it likes to know every notability by head-mark. The man and his work are always viewed together. People don’t ask what the *Journal* is saying, or what line the *Gazette* takes on a particular point; but what does Gutter say? or “ Smugg opposed to the New Roads Bill ? ” The provincial journalist is at the mercy of the public in a way unknown in London. A stranger without an introduction, or a previous appointment, could no more get at the editor of *The Times* or *Daily News*, than he could drop in on the Pope. But in provincial towns the unlucky editor is regarded as common property, and his office is as much a “ place of call ” for the party to which he belongs as the “ Black Bull ” or the “ Montfichet Arms.” Nay, he is pursued to his private dwelling, and while one visitor has hold of him in his parlour, another is waiting for him in the drawing-room, and a third in the study. There is a prevailing impression that he writes the whole paper, and he is expected to remember every paragraph that has appeared for three months back. Nothing is more provincial than the provincial

press. It is intensely local. Playful allusions of a personal character to the doctor's gig, to the rector's coat, are introduced for the sake of colour, especially in the obituary notices, where we are told how "the stick freely revolving on its axis," of the departed Pedlingtonian, gave a picturesque character to his walk. There is not much independence in the provincial press, and it mostly flatters the popular feeling of those whom it addresses. The "local paper" always keeps up the prevailing fiction that there is something about the particular town in which it is published, making it superior to other towns of the same size. When a lecture or a concert is criticised, we are told that Mr. Blogg or Miss Squally was "just a little nervous, this being his (or her) first appearance before a Reekyborough audience." The lecturer or singer, it is implied, may do well enough for Goosedubton; but Reekyborough is another affair. If you draw law-deeds or feel pulses in *that* city, there is a magic in the air which makes you a superior person. This is particularly noticeable in towns once the residence of a considerable local aristocracy. The modern inhabitants fancy that they derive a certain character from the fact, as whisky is coloured by being kept in a sherry cask. In one of our country towns the peerage is still represented by a brass door-plate bearing the name of an earl, and it is pointed out to strangers (the earl never lives there by the way) as if it was a work of art.

The duty of keeping up the local worship which is such an important element in provincialism is generally assumed by one or two gentlemen of a literary turn resident in the place. A genius of this kind usually combines some other and more profitable profession with that of historiographer and poet-laureate. Sometimes he is a doctor, whose quotations help to carry his pills down, and who is the great authority on the literary gossip of the day. When a famous man wanders into the neighbourhood, the doctor gets early information of the fact, and shows infinite patience and dexterity in coaxing him to the dinners and evenings of his best patients. The hospitality of Mrs. Leo Hunter now-a-days is not remarkable. She is "leonus arida nutrix," and gives her guests but scanty fare, though always of the genteelst kind. But at such scenes, Dr. Busyman, the local *littérateur*, is up to his neck in his own element; sticking close to the lion of the night, that everybody may see who caught him; introducing to him those whose goodwill secures practice and dinners; and helping him on with his great-coat at the close of the proceedings. Every town has its Busyman. It is they who write "Promenades in Pedlington," "Lays of the Pedlingtonians," and so forth; and at public dinners they return thanks for such toasts as "The Progress of Science," or "Literature and Art." To them the provincial editor looks for his memoir of the last of the great men of the neighbourhood whom death has removed. And he repays such services with many a hearty puff in his peculiar vein. "Another photograph," he will say, "of our gifted Busyman has been issued by our gifted Chick. How unctuous, with all its own humour, that mouth! What a depth

of thought in that eye!" But his favourite way of describing the object of his admiration is by the name of some other—though generally rather different—great man. Britain is full of Lambs, and Hoods, and Gibbons. There is the Hood of Pedlington, the Gibbon of Goosedubton, the Reekyborough Lamb, and many others. It must be an odd sensation to be a Lamb in Reekyborough and nowhere else! When such a man steps into the train he puts his aureole of fame in his pocket, and awakes at Euston Square to find himself as obscure as the waiter. Not a little of the bitterness with which the true provincial mind sometimes speaks of the metropolis is to be attributed to this fact. The jealousy, meanwhile, of provincial celebrities is embittered by the narrowness of the sphere in which they move. They must see and hear of each other whether they like it or not. There are cliques everywhere; but the smaller the cliques the more rigid the cliquism. We have heard of a man jumping out of a mourning coach at a funeral because a rival came in, and being rapidly imitated in the movement by a member of his professional tail. At one provincial town of our acquaintance boasting a university, members of the *Senatus* used to shake their fists at each other in periods of great excitement, and on one such occasion a Professor was heard to inform the Rector that "he did not care for him the fraction of a d—n." It is not always easy to get up a dinner-party in a place of this kind. You have to consider whether A will meet B, and whether C won't spoil the digestion of D. And the probable amount of an unpopular public man's debt to his butcher has been known to form an item of polite and festive conversation.

All party passions, political or ecclesiastical, rage with peculiar fury in the provincial mind; and party divisions are apt to affect social life in an undue degree. In Ireland there will be a room full of Protestants enjoying themselves on one side of the street, and a room full of Catholics on the other. "We are all Conservatives here," your neighbour at a Pedlington dinner tells you, while the faithful waiter (whom you have seen at other hospitable boards) is bringing round the champagne. "The red-haired fellow opposite is a Dissenter," says little Bobo, with an uneasy air, passing the claret-jug. What of that?—think you, on each occasion. But nowhere are people more carefully ticketed, or kept in their proper sets, than in provincial towns; and able and genial men will pass years almost in sight of each other, without ever coming together except at a public meeting. Such divisions perpetuate discord and encourage violence. No wonder, then, that there is so much personality in the provincial press. It is sometimes thought comic to allude to a political adversary as "The Snake," and a public man is watched in his private hours to see if he does anything inconsistent with his opinions on public questions. Woe, for instance, to the unlucky person who, having strong views on what he calls the "Sabbath question," has walked to his church on Sunday through the gardens of the city! "Argus" sends a letter to the right quarter, and the parish humourist, who takes charge of the cause of

popular freedom, is down upon the reverend man. There is a strange vitality, too, about jokes in genuine provincial regions. They seem to keep fresh in a wonderful way, though this, of course, depends a good deal on the sensitiveness of the nose. If a provincial editor has once made a hit by a sarcasm or a nickname, he repeats it with judicious frequency ; for he cannot be sure that a new jest will be successful, while he is sure that its production will be troublesome.

One very marked feature of those towns in which the provincial mind rules is their jealousy of each other. Some curious results of this have been seen in Scotland, where the boroughs are arranged in groups, so that five boroughs return a member among them. If one of these boroughs can, owing to the balance of parties in the others, determine the result, by voting as a whole, it will sometimes vote as a whole, regardless of politics, for the sake of the triumph of being master of the situation. This may be called "essence of provincialism;" and reminds one of the gentleman who, during a great fire at the Post Office, was heard calling to the fire-engine men "to play upon the Stoke-Pogis bag." Jealousy between town and town has been stimulated by the change which has gradually come about in the relations of towns. Now-a-days, the official superiority often rests with one place, while the other is infinitely beyond it in actual importance. It was but lately that Leeds complained of a want of proper recognition in Yorkshire; and at the other end of the country we see Brighton overshadowing Lewes, and Southampton Portsmouth. This kind of thing is going on in many parts ; and never produces such a curious state of feeling as when a small old town with a small "genteel" society is offended by the rapid development and overbearing prosperity of some less distinguished neighbour. Human audacity, one hopes, would never go the length of addressing a letter to "Warwick Castle, near Leamington." But if Warwick would be likely to burn such a letter by the hands of the common hangman—Leamington being quite a "genteel" place—think what the feelings of a well-regulated local mind must be when obscured by the opulent proximity of some mere seat of plebeian industry ! A small squire in a county we know, whose cousin was being courted by a county doctor, used always when he met the medical gent's gig in the lanes to hold his nose—cruelly and falsely pretending, thereby, to protect himself from the smell of pills. This is the natural attitude of the "genteel" towns in the case we have supposed. But just as the county doctor's gig continued to roll on, and one day drove the small squire's cousin home as the doctor's wife, so natural growths based on the new condition of things are not to be stopped. We mentioned Scotland just now. Among other signs that Scottish nationality, in its proper sense, is on the wane, must be reckoned the growing indifference of the rest of Scotland to the old pretensions of Edinburgh. For ages, of course, it has ceased to be the capital of the Scottish aristocracy. But we now find Scotch Members opposing measures of the Lord Advocate's, on the ground that they tend to create

places for members of the Edinburgh bar. Glasgow, meanwhile, and the rich West is annoyed that its law business should all have to come to the Edinburgh Court of Session. Perhaps the most amusing form that the rivalry of the two cities takes is a periodical controversy as to which drinks the most whisky and cuts the worst figure in the police returns. This pot and kettle—or rather kettle and kettle fight—is annually fought out by provincial journalists, to the regret of the best men, but to the infinite delectation of the *bond fide* provincial mind.

The peculiar narrowness which is so characteristic of provincialism produces some important results on the public life of the country. What are called "local" claims are often pushed to an extreme in elections; and the big brewer or banker, who subscribes to the races and the infirmary, and who can afford to give big dinners during the session to his supporters, is returned to Parliament, to the exclusion of men of brains, culture, and distinction. Provincialism fosters religious bigotry also; sends up petitions of a ferociously Sabbatarian and ultra-Protestant character; and is apt to support proposals for enabling men to deprive their neighbours of malt liquor. All this comes from the higher elements of such place having gravitated under the influence of centralization; or from what is left of those elements being swamped by the second and third rate people among whom it is left. Why does a great town like Newcastle, for instance, exclude novels from its literary institution? Simply because the physical sciences are more immediately profitable to the growth of the place—an essentially provincial reason. Every "place" ought to be, according to its resources, a fair type of the whole civilization of the country; strong, of course, in the particular points for which nature and history have marked it out; but not destitute of, or hostile to, whatever adds to the charm, culture, grace, and general humanity of other places. The tendency of the provincial spirit, however, is to devote one town to coals, a second to cotton, a third to iron, and so on; and to drive everything else away to seek its fortune. The Northern cities have allowed the University of Durham to decline, not because they prefer Oxford and Cambridge, but because they are indifferent to the kind of education which it is willing to give. The decay of so many old grammar schools in county-towns is another symptom of the same kind. When once a town is attacked by provincialism, it loses its relish for ideas—its intellectual ambition. Naturally the able men born in it begin to run away. At last comes a stage when it imports its ideas, like the fashions, from London, and gets its intellectual life down by the train. When we remember what the general run of "letters from London correspondents" are, we understand the condition to which provincial intellect may be reduced. The dependence of such readers on the metropolis is becoming very remarkable. Many provincial journals receive their best articles from London, and there is an office indeed which sends them down by the afternoon trains ready printed.

Surely all this may be pushed too far? It seems to us pleasant to

think of Shakspeare retiring to Stratford; of Bacon ordering that he should be buried in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, "because it is the parish church of my mansion-house of Gorhambury;" of Cowper at Olney; of Scott in his ancestral border district; of James Montgomery at Sheffield; of a thousand associations scattered over England, and enriching the national life, like the many rivers which flow, *not to swell the Thames, but to the four seas*. Provincialism robs the provinces of their poetry, as cockneyism, if it was allowed to get the upper hand, would degrade the Abbey and vulgarise the Tower. And it tends to perpetuate itself. Many a Scotchman would be content to stay in Scotland if the ecclesiastical bigotry were diminished; if the universities were made what they ought to be; if society would shake itself clear of the petty and contracted way of looking at things, which comes of nursing insignificant distinctions, and cultivating frigidity as a condition of politeness. The late Lord Eglinton was a Scot to the backbone; but when he was Viceroy of Ireland, he used to defend that office as helping to save Dublin from the provincialism which had overtaken Edinburgh. We have already shown in what sense we use the word; and that, according to that sense, every man who lives in the provinces is not a provincial, any more than every Londoner is a cockney. By general consent, however, there is a certain type of mind and manners which the world agrees to recognize under the name, and which must be better understood before it can be altered. For the influences which are to alter it, the provinces will have to look to London itself. The provinces feed London, and London in time will make up to them for what it has taken away. The double action of the railway system has been already referred to. It draws life to a centre, but it radiates it from the centre; the metropolis attracts more and more people, but it also sends more and more visitors back. As time rolls on, English life will interpenetrate itself by the action and reaction of its different elements, to a degree of which as yet no observer can form a conception; though, it is to be hoped, without destroying the local independence which is one of the bases of our political freedom. And while the Londoner becomes more a man of the country, and the man of the country more a Londoner, cockneyism and provincialism may be expected to recede together into the past.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXX.

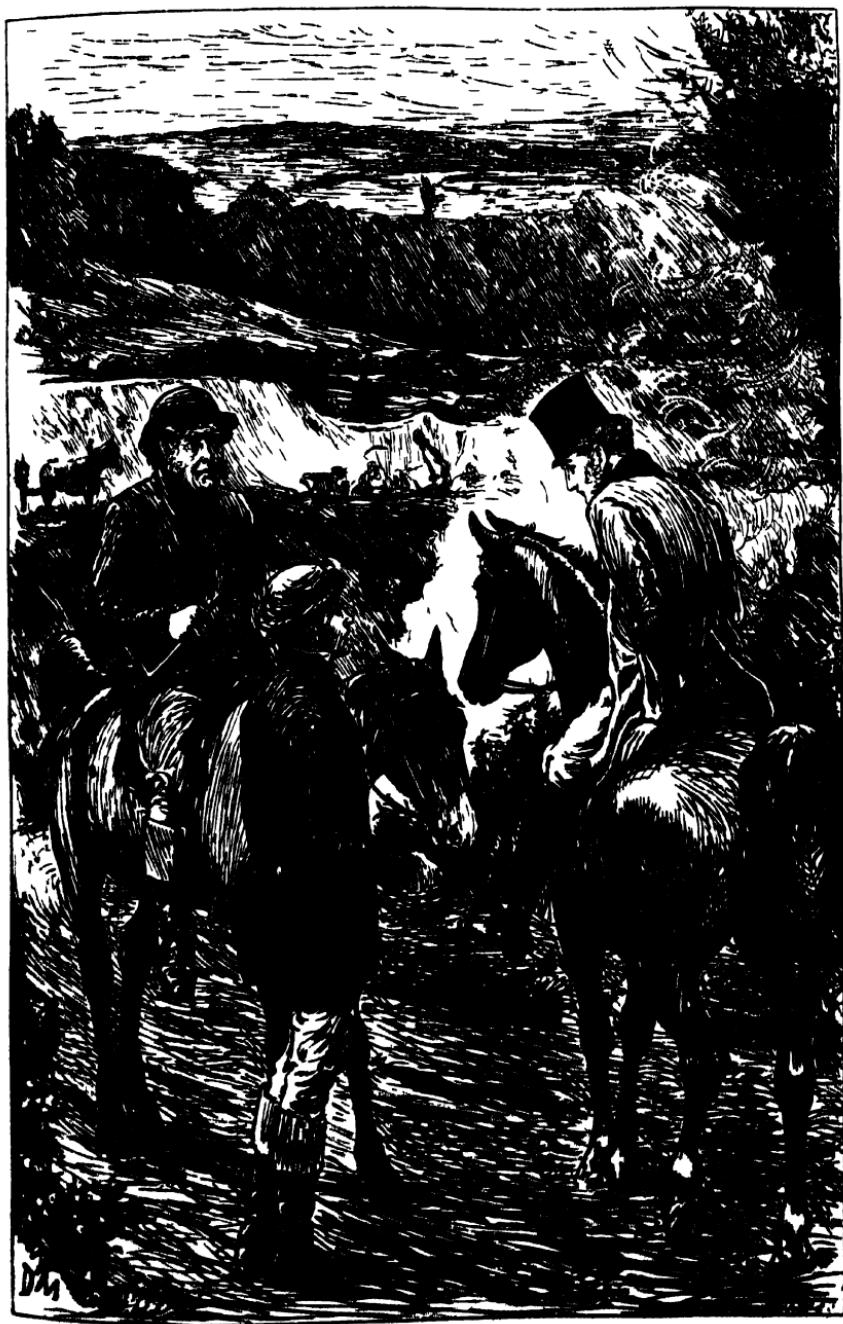
OLD WAYS AND NEW WAYS.



M

R. PRESTON was now installed in his new house at Hollingsford ; Mr. Sheepshanks having entered into dignified idleness at the house of his married daughter, who lived in the county town. His successor had plunged with energy into all manner of improvements ; and among others he fell to draining a piece of outlying waste and unreclaimed land of Lord Cumnor's, which was close to Squire Hamley's property ; that very piece for which he had had the Government grant, but which now lay neglected, and only "half-drained," with stacks of mossy tiles, and lines of up-turned furrows telling of abortive plans. It was not often that the squire rode in this direction now-a-

days ; but the cottage of a man who had been the squire's gamekeeper in those more prosperous days when the Hamleys could afford to preserve, was close to the rush-grown ground. This old servant and tenant was ill, and had sent a message up to the Hall, asking to see the squire ; not to reveal any secret, or to say anything particular, but only from the feudal loyalty, which made it seem to the dying man as if it would be a comfort to shake the hand, and look once more into the eyes of the lord and master whom he had served, and whose ancestors his own forbears had served for so many generations. And the squire was as fully alive as old Silas to the claims of the tie that existed between them. Though he hated the thought, and, still more, should hate the sight of the piece of land, on the side of which Silas's cottage stood, the squire ordered his horse, and rode off within half-an-hour of receiving the message. As he drew near the spot he thought he heard the sound of tools, and the hum of many voices, just as he



THE BURNING OF THE GORSE.

hear them a year or two before. He listened with surprise. Yes. Instead of the still solitude he had expected, there was the clink of iron, the heavy gradual thud of the fall of barrows-full of soil—the cry and shout of labourers. But not on his land—better worth expense and trouble by far than the reedy clay common on which the men were, in fact, employed. He knew it was Lord Cumnor's property; and he knew Lord Cumnor and his family had gone up in the world ("the Whig rascals!"), both in wealth and in station, as the Hamleys had gone down. But all the same—in spite of long known facts, and in spite of reason—the squire's ready anger rose high at the sight of his neighbour doing what he had been unable to do, and he a Whig; and his family only in the county since Queen Anne's time. He went so far as to wonder whether they might not—the labourers he meant—avail themselves of his tiles, lying so conveniently close to hand. All these thoughts, regrets, and wonders were in his mind as he rode up to the cottage he was bound to, and gave his horse in charge to a little lad, who had hitherto found his morning's business and amusement in playing at "houses" with a still younger sister, with some of the squire's neglected tiles. But he was old Silas's grandson, and he might have battered the rude red earthenware to pieces—a whole stack—one by one, and the squire would have said little or nothing. It was only that he would not spare one to a labourer of Lord Cumnor's. No! not one.

Old Silas lay in a sort of closet, opening out of the family living-room. The small window that gave it light looked right on to the "moor," as it was called; and by day the check curtain was drawn aside so that he might watch the progress of the labour. Everything about the old man was clean, of course; and, with Death, the leveller, so close at hand, it was the labourer who made the first advances, and put out his horny hand to the squire.

"I thought you'd come, squire. Your father came for to see my father as he lay a-dying."

"Come, come, my man!" said the squire, easily affected, as he always was. "Don't talk of dying, we shall soon have you out, never fear. They've sent you up some soup from the Hall, as I bade 'em, haven't they?"

"Ay, ay, I've had all as I could want for to eat and to drink. The young squire and Master Roger was here yesterday."

"Yes, I know."

"But I'm a deal nearer Heaven to-day, I am. I should like you to look after the covers in the West Spinney, squire; them gorse, you know, where th' old fox had her hole—her as give 'em so many a run. You'll mind it, squire, though you was but a lad. I could laugh to think on her tricks yet." And, with a weak attempt at a laugh, he got himself into a violent fit of coughing, which alarmed the squire, who thought he would never get his breath again. His daughter-in-law came in at the sound, and told the squire that he had these coughing-bouts very frequently, and that she thought he would go off in one of them before long. This

opinion of hers was spoken simply out before the old man, who now lay gasping and exhausted upon his pillow. Poor people acknowledge the inevitableness and the approach of death in a much more straightforward manner than is customary among more educated folk. The squire was shocked at her hard-heartedness, as he considered it; but the old man himself had received much tender kindness in return from his daughter-in-law; and what she had just said was no more news to him than the fact that the sun would rise to-morrow. He was more anxious to go on with his story.

"Them navvies—I call 'em navvies because some on 'em is strangers, though some on 'em is th' men as was turned off your own works, squire, when there came orders to stop 'em last fall—they're a-pulling up gorse and brush to light their fire for warming up their messes. It's a long way off to their homes, and they mostly dine here; and there'll be nothing of a cover left, if you don't see after 'em. I thought I should like to tell ye afore I died. Parson's been here; but I did na tell him. He's all for the earl's folk, and he'd not ha' heeded. It's the earl as put him into his church, I reckon, for he said what a fine thing it were for to see so much employment a-given to the poor, and he never said nought o' th' sort when your works were agait, squire."

This long speech had been interrupted by many a cough and gasp for breath; and having delivered himself of what was on his mind, he turned his face to the wall, and appeared to be going to sleep. Presently he roused himself with a start.

"I know I flogged him well, I did. But he were after pheasants' eggs, and I didn't know he were an orphan. Lord, forgive me!"

"He's thinking on David Morton, the cripple, as used to go about trapping venison," whispered the woman.

"Why, he died long ago—twenty year, I should think," replied the squire.

"Ay, but when grandfather goes off i' this way to sleep after a bout of talking he seems to be dreaming on old times. He'll not waken up yet, sir; you'd best sit down if you'd like to stay," she continued, as she went into the house-place and dusted a chair with her apron. "He was very particular in bidding me wake him if he were asleep, and you or Mr. Roger was to call. Mr. Roger said he'd be coming again this morning—but he'll likely sleep an hour or more, if he's let alone."

"I wish I'd said good-by, I should like to have done that."

"He drops off so sudden," said the woman. "But if you'd be better pleased to have said it, squire, I'll waken him up a bit."

"No, no!" the squire called out as the woman was going to be as good as her word. "I'll come again, perhaps to-morrow. And tell him I was sorry; for I am indeed. And be sure and send to the Hall for anything you want! Mr. Roger is coming, is he? He'll bring me word how he is, later on. I should like to have bidden him good-by."

So, giving sixpence to the child who had held his horse, the squire

mounted. He sate still a moment, looking at the busy work going on before him, and then at his own half-completed drainage. It was a bitter pill. He had objected to borrowing from Government, in the first instance; and then his wife had persuaded him to the step; and after it was once taken, he was as proud as could be of the only concession to the spirit of progress he ever made in his life. He had read and studied the subject pretty thoroughly, if also very slowly, during the time his wife had been influencing him. He was tolerably well up in agriculture, if in nothing else; and at one time he had taken the lead among the neighbouring landowners, when he first began tile-drainage. In those days people used to speak of Squire Hamley's hobby; and at market ordinaries, or county dinners, they rather dreaded setting him off on long repetitions of arguments from the different pamphlets on the subject which he had read. And now the proprietors all around him were draining—draining; his interest to Government was running on all the same, though his works were stopped, and his tiles deteriorating in value. It was not a soothing consideration, and the squire was almost ready to quarrel with his shadow. He wanted a vent for his ill-humour; and suddenly remembering the devastations on his covers, which he had heard about not a quarter of an hour before, he rode up to the men busy at work on Lord Cumnor's land. Just before he got up to them he encountered Mr. Preston, also on horseback, come to overlook his labourers. The squire did not know him personally, but from the agent's manner of speaking, and the deference that was evidently paid to him, Mr. Hamley saw that he was a responsible person. So he addressed the agent:—"I beg your pardon, I suppose you are the manager of these works?"

Mr. Preston replied,—“Certainly. I am that and many other things besides, at your service. I have succeeded Mr. Sheepshanks in the management of my lord's property. Mr. Hamley of Hamley, I believe?”

The squire bowed stiffly. He did not like his name to be asked or resumed upon in that manner. An equal might conjecture who he was, to recognize him, but, till he announced himself, an inferior had no right to do more than address him respectfully as “sir.” That was the squire's code of etiquette.

“I am Mr. Hamley of Hamley. I suppose you are as yet ignorant of the boundary of Lord Cumnor's land, and so I will inform you that my property begins at the pond yonder—just where you see the rise in the ground.”

“I am perfectly acquainted with that fact, Mr. Hamley,” said Mr. Preston, a little annoyed at the ignorance attributed to him. “But may I inquire why my attention is called to it just now?”

The squire was beginning to boil over; but he tried to keep his temper in. The effort was very much to be respected, for it was a great one. There was something in the handsome and well-dressed agent's tone and manner inexpressibly irritating to the squire, and it was not lessened by an involuntary comparison of the capital roadster on which Mr. Preston was mounted with his own ill-groomed and aged cob.

"I have been told that your men out yonder do not respect these boundaries, but are in the habit of plucking up gorse from my covers to light their fires."

"It is possible they may!" said Mr. Preston, lifting his eyebrows, his manner being more nonchalant than his words. "I daresay they think no great harm of it. However, I'll inquire."

"Do you doubt my word, sir?" said the squire, fretting his mare till she began to dance about. "I tell you I've heard it only within this last half-hour."

"I don't mean to doubt your word, Mr. Hamley; it's the last thing I should think of doing. But you must excuse my saying that the argument which you have twice brought up for the authenticity of your statement, 'that you have heard it within the last half-hour,' is not quite so forcible as to preclude the possibility of a mistake."

"I wish you'd only say in plain language that you doubt my word," said the squire, clenching and slightly raising his horsewhip. "I can't make out what you mean—you use so many words."

"Pray don't lose your temper, sir. I said I should inquire. You have not seen the men pulling up gorse yourself, or you would have named it. I surely may doubt the correctness of your information until I have made some inquiry; at any rate, that is the course I shall pursue, and if it gives you offence, I shall be sorry, but I shall do it just the same. When I am convinced that harm has been done to your property, I shall take steps to prevent it for the future, and of course, in my lord's name, I shall pay you compensation—it may probably amount to half-a-crown." He added these last words in a lower tone, as if to himself, with a slight, contemptuous smile on his face.

"Quiet, mare, quiet," said the squire, quite unaware that he was the cause of her impatient movements by the way he was perpetually tightening her reins; and also, perhaps, he unconsciously addressed the injunction to himself.

Neither of them saw Roger Hamley, who was just then approaching them with long, steady steps. He had seen his father from the door of old Silas's cottage, and, as the poor fellow was still asleep, he was coming to speak to his father, and was near enough now to hear the next words.

"I don't know who you are, but I've known land-agents who were gentlemen, and I've known some who were not. You belong to this last set, young man," said the squire, "that you do. I should like to try my horsewhip on you for your insolence."

"Pray, Mr. Hamley," replied Mr. Preston, coolly, "curb your temper a little, and reflect. I really feel sorry to see a man of your age in such a passion"—moving a little farther off, however, but really more with a desire to save the irritated man from carrying his threat into execution, out of a dislike to the slander and excitement it would cause, than from any personal dread. Just at this moment Roger Hamley came close up. He

was panting a little, and his eyes were very stern and dark; but he spoke quietly enough.

"Mr. Preston, I can hardly understand what you mean by your last words. But, remember, my father is a gentleman of age and position, and not accustomed to receive advice as to the management of his temper from young men like you."

"I desired him to keep his men off my land," said the squire to his son—his wish to stand well in Roger's opinion restraining his temper a little; but though his words might be a little calmer, there were all other signs of passion present—the discoloured complexion, the trembling hands, the fiery cloud in his eyes. "He refused, and doubted my word."

Mr. Preston turned to Roger, as if appealing from Philip drunk to Philip sober, and spoke in a tone of cool explanation, which, though not insolent in words, was excessively irritating in manner.

"Your father has misunderstood me—perhaps it is no wonder," trying to convey, by a look of intelligence at the son, his opinion that the father was in no state to hear reason. "I never refused to do what was just and right. I only required further evidence as to the past wrong-doing; your father took offence at this"—and then he shrugged his shoulders, and lifted his eyebrows in a manner he had formerly learnt in France.

"At any rate, sir! I can scarcely reconcile the manner and words to my father, which I heard you use when I first came up, with the deference you ought to have shown to a man of his age and position. As to the fact of the trespass——"

"They are pulling up all the gorse, Roger—there'll be no cover whatever for game soon," put in the squire.

Roger bowed to his father, but took up his speech at the point it was at before the interruption.

"I will inquire into it myself at a cooler moment; and if I find that such trespass or damage has been committed, of course I shall expect that you will see it put a stop to. Come, father! I am going to see old Silas—perhaps you don't know that he is very ill." So he endeavoured to wile the squire away to prevent further words. He was not entirely successful.

Mr. Preston was enraged by Roger's calm and dignified manner, and threw after them this parting shaft, in the shape of a loud soliloquy,—

"Position, indeed! What are we to think of the position of a man who begins works like these without counting the cost, and comes to a stand-still, and has to turn off his labourers just at the beginning of winter, leaving——"

They were too far off to hear the rest. The squire was on the point of turning back before this, but Roger took hold of the reins of the old mare, and led her over some of the boggy ground, as if to guide her into sure footing, but, in reality, because he was determined to prevent the renewal of the quarrel. It was well that the cob knew him, and was, indeed, old enough to prefer quietness to dancing; for Mr. Hamley plucked hard at

the reins, and at last broke out with an oath,—“Damn it, Roger ! I’m not a child ; I won’t be treated as such. Leave go, I say !”

Roger let go ; they were not on firm ground, and he did not wish any watchers to think that he was exercising any constraint over his father ; and this quiet obedience to his impatient commands did more to soothe the squire than anything else could have effected just then.

“I know I turned them off—what could I do ? I’d no more money for their weekly wages ; it’s a loss to me, as you know. He doesn’t know, no one knows, but I think your mother would, how it cut me to turn ‘em off just before winter set in. I lay awake many a night thinking of it, and I gave them what I had—I did, indeed. I hadn’t got money to pay ‘em, but I had three barren cows fattened, and gave every scrap of meat to the men, and I let ‘em go into the woods and gather what was fallen, and I winked at their breaking off old branches, and now to have it cast up against me by that cur—that servant. But I’ll go on with the works, by —, I will, if only to spite him. I’ll show him who I am. My position, indeed ! A Hamley of Hamley takes a higher position than his master. I’ll go on with the works, see if I don’t ! I’m paying between one and two hundred a year interest on Government money. I’ll raise some more if I go to the Jews ; Osborne has shown me the way, and Osborne shall pay for it—he shall. I’ll not put up with insults. You shouldn’t have stopped me, Roger ! I wish to heaven I’d horsewhipped the fellow !”

He was lashing himself again into an impotent rage, painful to a son to witness ; but just then the little grandchild of old Silas, who had held the squire’s horse during his visit to the sick man, came running up, breathless :

“Please, sir, please, squire, mammy has sent me ; grandfather has wakened up sudden, and mammy says he’s dying, and would you please come ; she says he’d take it as a kind compliment, she’s sure.”

So they went to the cottage, the squire speaking never a word, but suddenly feeling as if lifted out of a whirlwind and set down in a still and awful place.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A PASSIVE COQUETTE.

It is not to be supposed that such an encounter as Mr. Preston had just had with Roger Hamley sweetened the regards in which the two young men henceforward held each other. They had barely spoken to each other before, and but seldom met ; for the land-agent’s employment had hitherto lain at Ashcombe, some sixteen or seventeen miles from Hamley. He was older than Roger by several years ; but during the time he had been in the country Osborne and Roger had been at school and at college. Mr. Preston was prepared to dislike the Hamleys for

many unreasonable reasons. Cynthia and Molly had both spoken of the brothers with familiar regard, implying considerable intimacy ; their flowers had been preferred to his on the occasion of the ball ; most people spoke well of them ; and Mr. Preston had an animal's instinctive jealousy and combativeness against all popular young men. Their "position"—poor as the Hamleys might be—was far higher than his own in the county ; and, moreover, he was agent to the great Whig lord, whose political interests were diametrically opposed to those of the old Tory squire. Not that Lord Cumnor troubled himself much about his political interests. His family had obtained property and title from the Whigs at the time of the Hanoverian succession ; and so, traditionally, he was a Whig, and had belonged in his youth to Whig clubs, where he had lost considerable sums of money to Whig gamblers. All this was satisfactory and consistent enough. And if Lord Hollingsford had not been returned for the county on the Whig interest—as his father had been before him, until he had succeeded to the title—it is quite probable Lord Cumnor would have considered the British constitution in danger, and the patriotism of his ancestors ungratefully ignored. But, excepting at elections, he had no notion of making Whig and Tory a party cry. He had lived too much in London, and was of too sociable a nature, to exclude any man who jumped with his humour, from the hospitality he was always ready to offer, be the agreeable acquaintance Whig, Tory, or Radical. But in the county of which he was lord-lieutenant, the old party distinction was still a shibboleth by which men were tested for their fitness for social intercourse, as well as on the hustings. If by any chance a Whig found himself at a Tory dinner-table—or vice versa—the food was hard of digestion, and wine and viands were criticized rather than enjoyed. A marriage between the young people of the separate parties was almost as unheard-of and prohibited an alliance as that of Romeo and Juliet's. And of course Mr. Preston was not a man in whose breast such prejudices would die away. They were an excitement to him for one thing, and called out all his talent for intrigue on behalf of the party to which he was allied. Moreover, he considered it as loyalty to his employer to "scatter his enemies" by any means in his power. He had always hated and despised the Tories in general ; and after that interview on the marshy common in front of Silas's cottage, he hated the Hamleys and Roger especially, with a very choice and particular hatred. "That prig," as hereafter he always designated Roger—"he shall pay for it yet," he said to himself by way of consolation, after the father and son had left him. "What a lout it is!"—watching the receding figures. "The old chap has twice as much spunk," as the squire tugged at his bridle-reins. "The old mare could make her way better without being led, my fine fellow. But I see through your dodge. You're afraid of your old father turning back and getting into another rage. Position indeed ! a beggarly squire—a man who did turn off his men just before winter, to rot or starve, for all he cared—it's just like a venal old Tory." And, under the

cover of sympathy with the dismissed labourers, Mr. Preston indulged his own private pique very pleasantly.

Mr. Preston had many causes for rejoicing : he might have forgotten this discomfiture, as he chose to feel it, in the remembrance of an increase of income, and in the popularity he enjoyed in his new abode. All Hollingford came forward to do the earl's new agent honour. Mr. Sheepshanks had been a crabbed, crusty old bachelor, frequenting inn-parlours on market-days, not unwilling to give dinners to three or four chosen friends and familiars, with whom, in return, he dined from time to time, and with whom, also, he kept up an amicable rivalry in the matter of wines. But he "did not appreciate female society," as Miss Browning elegantly worded his unwillingness to accept the invitations of the Hollingford ladies. He was unrefined enough to speak of these invitations to his intimate friends aforesaid in the following manner, "Those old women's worrying," but, of course, they never heard of this. Little quarter-of-sheet notes, without any envelopes—that invention was unknown in those days—but sealed in the corners when folded up instead of gummed as they are fastened at present, occasionally passed between Mr. Sheepshanks and the Miss Brownings, Mrs. Goodenough or others. In the first instance, the form ran as follows :—"Miss Browning and her sister, Miss Phœbe Browning, present their respectful compliments to Mr. Sheepshanks, and beg to inform him that a few friends have kindly consented to favour them with their company at tea on Thursday next. Miss Browning and Miss Phœbe will take it very kindly if Mr. Sheepshanks will join their little circle."

Now for Mrs. Goodenough.

"Mrs. Goodenough's respects to Mr. Sheepshanks, and hopes he is in good health. She would be very glad if he would favour her with his company to tea on Monday. My daughter, in Comberfmere, has sent me a couple of guinea-fowls, and Mrs. Goodenough hopes Mr. Sheepshanks will stay and take a bit of supper."

No need for the dates of the days of the month. The good ladies would have thought that the world was coming to an end if the invitation had been sent out a week before the party therein named. But not even guinea-fowls for supper could tempt Mr. Sheepshanks. He remembered the made-wines he had tasted in former days at Hollingford parties, and shuddered. Bread-and-cheese, with a glass of bitter-beer, or a little brandy-and-water, partaken of in his old clothes (which had worn into shapes of loose comfort, and smelt strongly of tobacco), he liked better than roast guinea-fowl and birch-wine, even without throwing into the balance the stiff uneasy coat, and the tight neckcloth and tighter shoes. So the ex-agent had been seldom, if ever, seen at the Hollingford tea-parties. He might have had his form of refusal stereotyped, it was so invariably the same.

"Mr. Sheepshanks' duty to Miss Browning and her sister" (to Mrs. Goodenough, or to others, as the case might be). "Business of import-

ance prevents him from availing himself of their polite invitation ; for which he begs to return his best thanks."

: But now that Mr. Preston had succeeded, and come to live in Hollingsford, things were changed.

He accepted every civility right and left, and won golden opinions accordingly. Parties were made in his honour, "just as if he had been a bride," Miss Phœbe Browning said ; and to all of them he went.

"What's the man after ?" said Mr. Sheepshanks to himself, when he heard of his successor's affability, and sociability, and amiability, and a variety of other agreeable "ilities," from the friends whom the old steward still retained at Hollingsford.

"Preston's not a man to put himself out for nothing. He's deep. He'll be after something solider than popularity."

The sagacious old bachelor was right. Mr. Preston was "after" something more than mere popularity. He went wherever he had a chance of meeting Cynthia Kirkpatrick.

It might be that Molly's spirits were more depressed at this time than they were in general ; or that Cynthia was exultant, unawares to herself, in the amount of attention and admiration she was receiving from Roger by day, from Mr. Preston in the evening, but the two girls seemed to have parted company in cheerfulness. Molly was always gentle, but very grave and silent. Cynthia, on the contrary, was merry, full of pretty mockeries, and hardly ever silent. When first she came to Hollingsford one of her great charms had been that she was such a gracious listener ; now her excitement, by whatever caused, made her too restless to hold her tongue ; yet what she said was too pretty, too witty, not to be a winning and sparkling interruption, eagerly welcomed by those who were under her sway. Mr. Gibson was the only one who observed this change, and reasoned upon it.

"She is in a mental fever of some kind," thought he to himself. "She is very fascinating, but I don't quite understand her." If Molly had not been so entirely loyal to her friend, she might have thought this constant brilliancy a little tiresome when brought into every-day life ; it was not the sunshiny rest of a placid lake, it was rather the glitter of the pieces of a broken mirror, which confuses and bewilders. Cynthia would not talk quietly about anything now ; subjects of thought or conversation seemed to have lost their relative value. There were exceptions to this mood of hers, when she sank into deep fits of silence, that would have been gloomy had it not been for the never varying sweetness of her temper. If there was a little kindness to be done to either Mr. Gibson or Molly, Cynthia was just as ready as ever to do it ; nor did she refuse to do anything her mother wished, however fidgety might be the humour that prompted the wish. But in this latter case Cynthia's eyes were not quickened by her heart.

Molly was dejected, she knew not why. Cynthia had drifted a little apart ; that was not it. Her stepmother had whimsical moods ; and if

Cynthia displeased her, she would oppress Molly with small kindnesses and pseudo-affection. Or else everything was wrong, the world was out of joint, and Molly had failed in her mission to set it right, and was to be blamed accordingly. But Molly was of too steady a disposition to be much moved by the changeableness of an unreasonable person. She might be annoyed, or irritated, but she was not depressed. That was not it. The real cause was certainly this. As long as Roger was drawn to Cynthia, and sought her of his own accord, it had been a sore pain and bewilderment to Molly's heart ; but it was a straightforward attraction, and one which Molly acknowledged, in her humility and great power of loving, to be the most natural thing in the world. She would look at Cynthia's beauty and grace, and feel as if no one could resist it. And when she witnessed all the small signs of honest devotion which Roger was at no pains to conceal, she thought, with a sigh, that surely no girl could help relinquishing her heart to such tender, strong keeping as Roger's character ensured. She would have been willing to cut off her right hand, if need were, to forward his attachment to Cynthia ; and the self-sacrifice would have added a strange zest to a happy crisis. She was indignant at what she considered to be Mrs. Gibson's obtuseness to so much goodness and worth ; and when she called Roger "a country lout," or any other deprecative epithet, Molly would pinch herself in order to keep silent. But after all those were peaceful days compared to the present, when she, seeing the wrong side of the tapestry, after the wont of those who dwell in the same house with a plotter, became aware that Mrs. Gibson had totally changed her behaviour to Roger, from some cause unknown to Molly.

But he was always exactly the same ; "steady as old Time," as Mrs. Gibson called him, with her usual originality ; "a rock of strength, under whose very shadow there is rest," as Mrs. Hamley had once spoken of him. So the cause of Mrs. Gibson's altered manner lay not in him. Yet now he was sure of a welcome, let him come at any hour he would. He was playfully reproved for having taken Mrs. Gibson's words too literally, and for never coming before lunch. But he said he considered her reasons for such words to be valid, and should respect them. And this was done out of his simplicity, and from no tinge of malice. Then in their family conversations at home, Mrs. Gibson was constantly making projects for throwing Roger and Cynthia together, with so evident a betrayal of her wish to bring about an engagement, that Molly chafed at the net spread so evidently, and at Roger's blindness in coming so willingly to be entrapped. She forgot his previous willingness, his former evidences of manly fondness for the beautiful Cynthia ; she only saw plots of which he was the victim, and Cynthia the conscious if passive bait. She felt as if she could not have acted as Cynthia did ; no, not even to gain Roger's love. Cynthia heard and saw as much of the domestic background as she did, and yet she submitted to the rôle assigned to her ! To be sure, this rôle would have been played by her unconsciously ; the things prescribed were what she would naturally have done ; but because they were

prescribed—by implication only, it is true—Molly would have resisted ; have gone out, for instance, when she was expected to stay at home ; or have lingered in the garden when a long country walk was planned. At last—for she could not help loving Cynthia, come what would—she determined to believe that Cynthia was entirely unaware of all ; but it was with an effort that she brought herself to believe it.

It may be all very pleasant “to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neera’s hair,” but young men at the outset of their independent life have many other cares in this prosaic England to occupy their time and their thoughts. Roger was Fellow of Trinity, to be sure ; and from the outside it certainly appeared as if his position, as long as he chose to keep unmarried, was a very easy one. His was not a nature, however, to sink down into inglorious ease, even had his fellowship income been at his disposal. He looked forward to an active life ; in what direction he had not yet determined. He knew what were his talents and his tastes ; and did not wish the former to lie buried, nor the latter, which he regarded as gifts, fitting him for some peculiar work, to be disregarded or thwarted. He rather liked awaiting an object, secure in his own energy to force his way to it, when he once saw it clearly. He reserved enough of money for his own personal needs, which were small, and for the ready furtherance of any project he might see fit to undertake ; the rest of his income was Osborne’s ; given and accepted in the spirit which made the bond between these two brothers so rarely perfect. It was only the thought of Cynthia that threw Roger off his balance. A strong man in everything else, about her he was as a child. He knew that he could not marry and retain his fellowship ; his intention was to hold himself loose from any employment or profession until he had found one to his mind, so there was no immediate prospect—no prospect for many years, indeed, that he would be able to marry. Yet he went on seeking Cynthia’s sweet company, listening to the music of her voice, basking in her sunshine, and feeding his passion in every possible way, just like an unreasoning child. He knew that it was folly—and yet he did it ; and it was perhaps this that made him so sympathetic with Osborne. Roger racked his brains about Osborne’s affairs much more frequently than Osborne troubled himself. Indeed, he had become so ailing and languid of late, that even the squire made only very faint objections to his desire for frequent change of scene, though formerly he used to grumble so much at the necessary expenditure it involved.

“After all, it does not cost much,” the squire said to Roger one day. “Choose how he does it, he does it cheaply ; he used to come and ask me for twenty, where now he does it for five. But he and I have lost each other’s language, that’s what we have ! and my dictionary” (only he called it “dixionary”) “has all got wrong because of those confounded debts—which he will never explain to me, or talk about—he always holds me off at arms’ length when I begin upon it—he does, Roger—me, his old dad, as was his primest favourite of all, when he was a little bit of a chap !”

The squire dwelt so much upon Osborne's reserved behaviour to himself, that brooding over this one subject perpetually he became more morose and gloomy than ever in his manner to Osborne, resenting the want of the confidence and affection that he thus repelled. So much so that Roger, who desired to avoid being made the receptacle of his father's complaints against Osborne—and Roger's passive listening was the sedative his father always sought—had often to have recourse to the discussion of the drainage works as a counter-irritant. The squire had felt Mr. Preston's speech about the dismissal of his workpeople very keenly ; it fell in with the reproaches of his own conscience, though, as he would repeat to Roger over and over again,—“I could not help it—how could I ?—I was drained dry of ready money—I wish the land was drained as dry as I am,” said he, with a touch of humour that came out before he was aware, and at which he smiled sadly enough. “What was I to do, I ask you, Roger ? I know I was in a rage—I've had a deal to make me so—and maybe I did not think as much about consequences as I should have done, when I gave orders for 'em to be sent off ; but I could not have done otherwise if I'd ha' thought for a twelvemonth in cool blood. Consequences ! I hate consequences ; they've always been against me ; they have. I'm so tied up I can't cut down a stick more, and that's a ‘consequence’ of having the property so deucedly well settled ; I wish I'd never had any ancestors. Ay, laugh, lad ! it does me good to see thee laugh a bit, after Osborne's long face, which always grows longer at sight o' me !”

“Look here, father ! ” said Roger, suddenly, “I'll manage somehow about the money for the works. You trust to me ; give me two months to turn myself in, and you shall have some money, at any rate, to begin with.”

The squire looked at him, and his face brightened as a child's does at the promise of a pleasure made to him by some one on whom he can rely. He became a little graver, however, as he said,—“But how will you get it ? It's hard enough work.”

“Never mind ; I'll get it—a hundred or so at first—I don't yet know how—but remember, father, I'm a Senior Wrangler, and a ‘very promising young writer,’ as that review called me. Oh, you don't know what a fine fellow you've got for a son. You should have read that review to know all my wonderful merits.”

“I did, Roger. I heard Gibson speaking of it, and I made him get it for me. I should have understood it better if they could have called the animals by their English names, and not put so much of their French lingo into it.”

“But it was an answer to an article by a French writer,” pleaded Roger.

“I'd ha' let him alone ! ” said the squire, earnestly. “We had to beat 'em, and we did it at Waterloo ; but I'd not demean myself by answering any of their lies, if I was you. But I got through the review, for all their Latin and French ; I did, and if you doubt me, you just look at the

end of the great ledger, turn it upside down, and you'll find I've copied out all the fine words they said of you : 'careful observer,' 'strong nervous English,' 'rising philosopher.' Oh! I can nearly say it all off by heart, for many a time when I am frabbed by bad debts, or Osborne's bills, or moidered with accounts, I turn the ledger wrong way up, and smoke a pipe over it, while I read those pieces out of the review which speak about you, lad!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

COMING EVENTS.

ROGER had turned over many plans in his mind, by which he thought that he could obtain sufficient money for the purpose he desired to accomplish. His careful grandfather, who had been a merchant in the city, had so tied up the few thousands he had left to his daughter, that although, in case of her death before her husband's, the latter might enjoy the life interest thereof, yet in case of both their deaths, their second son did not succeed to the property until he was five-and-twenty; and if he died before that age the money that would then have been his went to one of his cousins on the maternal side. In short, the old merchant had taken as many precautions about his legacy as if it had been for tens, instead of units of thousands. Of course Roger might have slipped through all these meshes by insuring his life until the specified age; and probably if he had consulted any lawyer this course would have been suggested to him. But he disliked taking any one into his confidence on the subject of his father's want of ready money. He had obtained a copy of his grandfather's will at Doctors' Commons, and he imagined that all the contingencies involved in it would be patent to the light of nature and common sense. He was a little mistaken in this, but not the less resolved that money in some way he would have in order to fulfil his promise to his father, and for the ulterior purpose of giving the squire some daily interest to distract his thoughts from the regrets and cares that were almost weakening his mind. It was "Roger Hamley, Senior Wrangler and Fellow of Trinity, to the highest bidder, no matter what honest employment," and presently it came down to "any bidder at all."

Another perplexity and distress at this time weighed upon Roger. Osborne, heir to the estate, was going to have a child. The Hamley property was entailed on "heirs male born in lawful wedlock." Was the "wedlock" lawful? Osborne never seemed to doubt that it was—never seemed, in fact, to think twice about it. And if he, the husband, did not, how much less did Aimée, the trustful wife? Yet who could tell how much misery any shadows of illegality might cast into the future? One evening Roger, sitting by the languid, careless, dilettante Osborne, began to question him as to the details of the marriage. Osborne knew instinctively at what Roger was aiming. It was not that he did not desire perfect

legality in justice to his wife ; it was that he was so indisposed at the time that he hated to be bothered. It was something like the refrain of Gray's Scandinavian Prophetess : "Leave me, leave me to repose."

" But do try and tell me how you managed it."

" How tiresome you are, Roger," put in Osborne.

" Well, I dare say I am. Go on !"

" I've told you Morrison married us. You remember old Morrison at Trinity ? "

" Yes; as good and blunder-headed a fellow as ever lived."

" Well, he's taken orders ; and the examination for priest's orders fatigued him so much that he got his father to give him a hundred or two for a tour on the Continent. He meant to get to Rome, because he heard that there were such pleasant winters there. So he turned up at Metz in August."

" I don't see why."

" No more did he. He never was great in geography, you know ; and somehow he thought that Metz, pronounced French fashion, must be on the road to Rome. Some one had told him so in fun. However, it was very well for me that I met with him there for I was determined to be married, and that without loss of time."

" But Aimée is a Catholic ? "

" That's true ! but you see I am not. You don't suppose I would do her any wrong, Roger ? " asked Osborne, sitting up in his lounging-chair, and speaking rather indignantly to Roger, his face suddenly flushing red.

" No ! I'm sure you would not mean it ; but you see there's a child coming, and this estate is entailed on 'heirs male.' Now, I want to know if the marriage is legal or not ? and it seems to me it's a ticklish question."

" Oh ! " said Osborne, falling back into repose, " if that's all, I suppose you're next heir male, and I can trust you as I can myself. You know my marriage is *bond fide* in intention, and I believe it to be legal in fact. We went over to Strasbourg ; Aimée picked up a friend—a good middle-aged Frenchwoman—who served half as bridesmaid, half as chaperone, and then we went before the mayor—préfet—what do you call them ? I think Morrison rather enjoyed the spree. I signed all manner of papers in the prefecture ; I did not read them over, for fear lest I could not sign them conscientiously. It was the safest plan. Aimée kept trembling so I thought she would faint, and then we went off to the nearest English chaplaincy, Carlsruhe, and the chaplain was away, so Morrison easily got the loan of the chapel, and we were married the next day."

" But surely some registration or certificate was necessary ? "

" Morrison said he would undertake all those forms ; and he ought to know his own business. I know I tipped him pretty well for the job."

" You must be married again," said Roger, after a pause, " and that before the child is born. Have you got a certificate of the marriage ? "

" I dare say Morrison has got it somewhere. But I believe I'm legally

married according to the laws both of England and France; I really do, old fellow. I've got the préfet's papers somewhere."

"Never mind! you shall be married again in England. Aimée goes to the Roman Catholic chapel at Prestham, does not she?"

"Yes. She is so good I would not disturb her in her religion for the world."

"Then you shall be married both there and at the church of the parish in which she lives as well," said Roger, decidedly.

"It's a great deal of trouble, unnecessary trouble, and unnecessary expense, I should say," said Osborne. "Why can't you leave well alone? Neither Aimée nor I are of the sort of stuff to turn scoundrels and deny the legality of our marriage, and if the child is a boy and my father dies, and I die, why I'm sure you'll do him justice, as sure as I am of myself, old fellow!"

"But if I die into the bargain? Make a hecatomb of the present Hamleys all at once, while you are about it. Who succeeds as heir male?"

Osborne thought for a moment. "One of the Irish Hamleys, I suppose. I fancy they are needy chaps. Perhaps you're right. But what need to have such gloomy forebodings?"

"The law makes one have foresight in such affairs," said Roger. "So I'll go down to Aimée next week when I'm in town, and I'll make all necessary arrangements before you come. I think you'll be happier if it is all done."

"I shall be happier if I've a chance of seeing the little woman, that I grant you. But what is taking you up to town? I wish I'd money to run about like you, instead of being shut up for ever in this dull old house."

Osborne was apt occasionally to contrast his position with Roger's in a tone of complaint, forgetting that both were the results of character, and also that out of his income Roger gave up so large a portion for the maintenance of his brother's wife. But if this ungenerous thought of Osborne's had been set clearly before his conscience, he would have smote his breast and cried "*Mea culpa*" with the best of them; it was only that he was too indolent to keep an unassisted conscience.

"I should not have thought of going up," said Roger, reddening as if he had been accused of spending another's money instead of his own, "if I had not had to go up on business. Lord Hollingsford has written for me; he knows my great wish for employment, and has heard of something which he considers suitable; there's his letter if you care to read it. But it does not tell anything definitely."

Osborne read the letter and returned it to Roger. After a moment or two of silence he said,—"Why do you want money? Are we taking too much from you? It's a great shame of me; but what can I do? Only suggest a career for me, and I'll follow it to-morrow." He spoke as if Roger had been reproaching him.

"My dear fellow, don't get those notions into your head ! I must do something for myself sometimes, and I have been on the look-out. Besides, I want my father to go on with his drainage, it would do good both to his health and his spirits. If I can advance any part of the money requisite, he and you shall pay me interest until you can return the capital."

"Roger, you're the providence of the family," exclaimed Osborne, suddenly struck by admiration at his brother's conduct, and forgetting to contrast it with his own.

So Roger went up to London and Osborne followed him, and for two or three weeks the Gibsons saw nothing of the brothers. But as wave succeeds to wave, so interest succeeds to interest. "The family," as they were called, came down for their autumn sojourn at the Towers; and again the house was full of visitors, and the Towers' servants, and carriages, and liveries were seen in the two streets of Hollingford, just as they might have been seen for scores of autumns past.

So runs the round of life from day to day. Mrs. Gibson found the chances of intercourse with the Towers rather more personally exciting than Roger's visits, or the rarer calls of Osborne Hamley. Cynthia had an old antipathy to the great family who had made so much of her mother, and so little of her; and whom she considered as in some measure the cause why she had seen so little of her mother in the days when the little girl had craved for love and found none. Moreover, Cynthia missed her slave, although she did not care for Roger one thousandth part of what he did for her; yet she had found it not unpleasant to have a man whom she thoroughly respected, and whom men in general respected, the subject of her eye, the glad ministrant to each scarce spoken wish, a person in whose sight all her words were pearls or diamonds, all his actions heavenly graciousness, and in whose thoughts she reigned supreme. She had no modest unconsciousness about her; and yet she was not vain. She knew of all this worship; and when from circumstances she longer received it she missed it. The Earl and the Countess, Lord Hollingsford and Lady Harriet, lords and ladies in general, liveries, dresses, bags of game, and rumours of riding parties were as nothing to her as compared to Roger's absence. And yet she did not love him. No, she did not love him. Molly knew that Cynthia did not love him. Molly grew angry with her many and many a time as the conviction of this fact was forced upon her. Molly did not know her own feelings; Roger had no overwhelming interest in what they might be; while his very life-breath seemed to depend on what Cynthia felt and thought. Therefore Molly had keen insight into her "sister's" heart; and she knew that Cynthia did not love Roger. Molly could have cried with passionate regret at the thought of the unvalued treasure lying at Cynthia's feet; and it would have been a merely unselfish regret. It was the old fervid tenderness. "Do not wish for the moon, O my darling, for I cannot give it thee." Cynthia's love was the moon Roger yearned for;

and Molly saw that it was far away and out of reach, else would she have strained her heart-chords to give it to Roger.

"I am his sister," she would say to herself. "That old bond is not done away with, though he is too much absorbed by Cynthia to speak about it just now. His mother called me 'Fanny,' it was almost like an adoption. I must wait and watch, and see if I can do anything for my brother."

One day Lady Harriet came to call on the Gibsons, or rather on Mrs. Gibson, for the latter retained her old jealousy if any one else in Hollingford was supposed to be on intimate terms at the great house, or in the least acquainted with their plans. Mr. Gibson might possibly know as much, but then he was professionally bound to secrecy. Out of the house she considered Mr. Preston as her rival, and he was aware that she did so, and delighted in teasing her by affecting a knowledge of family plans and details of affairs of which she was not aware. Indoors she was jealous of the fancy Lady Harriet had evidently taken for her stepdaughter, and she contrived to place quiet obstacles in the way of a too frequent intercourse between the two. These obstacles were not unlike the shield of the knight in the old story; only instead of the two sides presented to the two travellers approaching it from opposite quarters, one of which was silver, and one of which was gold, Lady Harriet saw the smooth and shining yellow radiance, while poor Molly only perceived a dull and heavy lead. To Lady Harriet it was "Molly is gone out; she will be so sorry to miss you, but she was obliged to go to see some old friends of her mother's whom she ought not to neglect: as I said to her, constancy is everything. It is Sterne, I think, who says, 'Thine own and thy mother's friends forsake not.' But, dear Lady Harriet, you'll stop till she comes home, won't you? I know how fond you are of her; in fact" (with a little surface playfulness) "I sometimes say you come more to see her than your poor old Clare."

To Molly it had previously been,—

"Lady Harriet is coming here this morning. I can't have any one else coming in. Tell Maria to say I'm not at home. Lady Harriet has always so much to tell me. Dear Lady Harriet! I've known all her secrets since she was twelve years old. You two girls must keep out of the way. Of course she'll ask for you, out of common civility; but you would only interrupt us if you came in, as you did the other day;"—now addressing Molly—"I hardly like to say so, but I thought it was very forward."

"Maria told me she had asked for me," put in Molly, simply.

"Very forward indeed!" continued Mrs. Gibson, taking no further notice of the interruption, except to strengthen the words to which Molly's little speech had been intended as a correction.

"I think this time I must secure her ladyship from the chances of such an intrusion, by taking care that you are out of the house, Molly. You had better go to the Holly Farm, and speak about those ~~damns~~ I ordered, and which have never been sent."

"I'll go," said Cynthia. "It's far too long a walk for Molly; she's had a bad cold, and is not as strong as she was a fortnight ago. I delight in long walks. If you want Molly out of the way, mamma, send her to the Miss Brownings—they are always glad to see her."

"I never said I wanted Molly out of the way, Cynthia," replied Mrs. Gibson. "You always put things in such an exaggerated—I should almost say, so coarse a manner. I am sure, Molly, my love, you could never have so misunderstood me; it is only on Lady Harriet's account."

"I don't think I can walk as far as the Holly Farm; papa would take the message; Cynthia need not go."

"Well! I'm the last person in the world to tax any one's strength; I'd sooner never see damson preserve again. Suppose you do go and see Miss Browning; you can pay her a nice long call—you know she likes that—and ask after Miss Phœbe's cold from me, you know. They were friends of your mother's, my dear, and I would not have you break off old friendships for the world. 'Constancy above everything' is my motto, as you know, and the memory of the dead ought always to be cherished."

"Now, mamma, where am I to go?" asked Cynthia. "Though Lady Harriet does not care for me as much as she does for Molly—indeed, quite the contrary I should say—yet she might ask after me, and I had better be safely out of the way."

"True!" said Mrs. Gibson, meditatively, yet unconscious of any satire in Cynthia's speech.

"She is much less likely to ask for you, my dear: I almost think you might remain in the house, or you might go to the Holly Farm; I really do want the damsons; or you might stay here in the dining-room, you know, so as to be ready to arrange lunch prettily, if she does take a fancy to stay for it. She is very fanciful, is dear Lady Harriet! I would not like her to think we made any difference in our meals because she stayed. 'Simple elegance,' as I tell her, 'always is what we aim at.' But still you could put out the best service, and arrange some flowers, and ask cook what there is for dinner that she could send us for lunch, and make it all look pretty, and impromptu, and natural. I think you had better stay at home, Cynthia, and then you could fetch Molly from Miss Browning's in the afternoon, you know, and you two could take a walk together."

"After Lady Harriet was fairly gone! I understand, mamma. Off with you, Molly. Make haste, or Lady Harriet may come and ask for you as well as mamma. I'll take care and forget where you are going to, so that no one shall learn from me where you are, and I'll answer for mamma's loss of memory."

"Child! what nonsense you talk; you quite confuse me with being silly," said Mrs. Gibson, fluttered and annoyed as she usually was with the Lilliputian darts Cynthia flung at her. She had recourse to her accustomed feckless piece of retaliation—bestowing some favour on Molly; and this did not hurt Cynthia one whit.

"Molly, darling, there's a very cold wind, though it looks so fine. You had better put on my Indian shawl; and it will look so pretty, too, on your grey gown—scarlet and grey—it's not everybody I would lend it to, but you're so careful."

"Thank you," said Molly: and she left Mrs. Gibsop in careless uncertainty as to whether her offer would be accepted or not.

Lady Harriet was sorry to miss Molly, as she was fond of the girl; but as she perfectly agreed with Mrs. Gibson's truism about "constancy" and "old friends," she saw no occasion for saying any more about the affair, but sat down in a little low chair with her feet on the fender. This said fender was made of bright bright steel, and was strictly tabooed to all household and plebeian feet; indeed the position, if they assumed it, was considered low-bred and vulgar.

"That's right, dear Lady Harriet! you can't think what a pleasure it is to me to welcome you at my own fireside, into my humble home."

"Humble! now, Clare, that's a little bit of nonsense, begging your pardon. I don't call this pretty little drawing-room a bit of a 'humble home.' It is as full of comforts, and of pretty things too, as any room of its size can be."

"Ah! how small you must feel it! even I had to reconcile myself to it at first."

"Well! perhaps your school-room was larger, but remember how bare it was, how empty of anything but deal tables, and forms, and mats. Oh, indeed, Clare, I quite agree with mamma, who always says you have done ~~very~~ well for yourself; and Mr. Gibson too! What an agreeable, well-informed man!"

"Yes, he is," said his wife, slowly, as if she did not like to relinquish her rôle of a victim to circumstances quite immediately. "He is very agreeable, very; only we see so little of him; and of course he comes home tired and hungry, and not inclined to talk to his own family, and apt to go to sleep."

"Come, come!" said Lady Harriet, "I'm going to have my turn now. We've had the complaint of a doctor's wife, now hear the moans of a peer's daughter. Our house is so overrun with visitors; and literally to-day I have come to you for a little solitude."

"Solitude!" exclaimed Mrs. Gibson. "Would you rather be alone?" slightly aggrieved.

"No, you dear silly woman; my solitude requires a listener, to whom I may say, 'How sweet is solitude.' But I am tired of the responsibility of entertaining. Papa is so open-hearted, he asks every friend he meets with to come and pay us a visit. Mamma is really a great invalid, but she does not choose to give up her reputation for good health, having always considered illness a want of self-control. So she gets wearied and worried by a crowd of people who are all of them open-mouthed for amusement of some kind; just like a brood of fledglings in a nest; so I have to be parent-bird, and pop morsels into their yellow

leathery bills, to find them swallowed down before I can think of where to find the next. Oh, it's 'entertaining' in the largest, literalest, dreariest sense of the word. So I have told a few lies this morning, and come off here for quietness and the comfort of complaining!"

Lady Harriet threw herself back in her chair, and yawned; Mrs. Gibson took one of her ladyship's hands in a soft sympathizing manner, and murmured, "Poor Lady Harriet!" and then she purred affectionately.

After a pause Lady Harriet started up and said—"I used to take you as my arbiter of morals when I was a little girl. Tell me, do you think it wrong to tell lies?"

"Oh, my dear! how can you ask such questions?—of course it is very wrong,—very wicked indeed, I think I may say. But I know you were only joking when you said you had told lies."

"No, indeed, I was not. I told as plump fat lies as you would wish to hear. I said I 'was obliged to go into Hollingford on business,' when the truth was there was no obligation in the matter, only an insupportable desire of being free from my visitors for an hour or two, and my only business was to come here, and yawn, and complain, and lounge at my leisure. I really think I'm unhappy at having told a story, as children express it."

"But, my dear Lady Harriet," said Mrs. Gibson, a little puzzled as to the exact meaning of the words that were trembling on her tongue, "I am sure you thought that you meant what you said, when you said it."

"No, I didn't," put in Lady Harriet.

"And besides, if you didn't, it was the fault of the tiresome people who drove you into such straits—yes, it was certainly their fault, not yours—and then you know the conventions of society—ah, what trammels they are!"

Lady Harriet was silent for a minute or two; then she said,—"Tell me, Clare; you've told lies sometimes, haven't you?"

"Lady Harriet! I think you might have known me better; but I know you don't mean it, dear."

"Yes, I do. You must have told white lies, at any rate. How did you feel after them?"

"I should have been miserable if I ever had. I should have died of self-reproach. 'The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' has always seemed to me such a fine passage. But then I have so much that is unbending in my nature, and in our sphere of life there are so few temptations. If we are humble, we are also simple, and unshackled by etiquette."

"Then you blame me very much? If somebody else will blame me, I shan't be so unhappy at what I said this morning."

"I am sure I never blamed you, not in my innermost heart, dear Lady Harriet. Blame you, indeed! That would be presumption in me."

"I think I shall set up a confessor! and it shan't be you, Clare, for you have always been only too indulgent to me."

After a pause she said,—“Can you give me some lunch, Clare? I don’t mean to go home till three. My ‘business’ will take me till then, as the people at the Towers are duly informed.”

: “Certainly. I shall be delighted! but you know we are very simple in our habits.”

“Oh, I only want a little bread and butter, and perhaps a slice of cold meat—you must not give yourself any trouble, Clare—perhaps you dine now? let me sit down just like one of your family.”

“Yes, you shall; I won’t make any alteration;—it will be so pleasant to have you sharing our family meal, dear Lady Harriet. But we dine late, we only lunch now. How low the fire is getting; I really am forgetting everything in the pleasure of this tête-à-tête!”

So she rang twice; with great distinctness, and with a long pause between the rings. Maria brought in coals.

But the signal was as well understood by Cynthia as the “Hall of Apollo” was by the servants of Lucullus. The brace of partridges that were to have been for the late dinner were instantly put down to the fire; and the prettiest china put out, and the table decked with flowers and fruit, arranged with all Cynthia’s usual dexterity and taste. So that when the meal was announced, and Lady Harriet entered the room, she could not but think her hostess’s apologies had been quite unnecessary; and be more and more convinced that Clare had done very well for herself. Cynthia now joined the party, pretty and elegant as she always was; but somehow she did not take Lady Harriet’s fancy; she only noticed her on account of her being her mother’s daughter. Her presence made the conversation more general, and Lady Harriet gave out several pieces of news, none of them of any great importance to her, but as what had been talked about by the circle of visitors assembled at the Towers.

“Lord Hollingsford ought to have been with us,” she said, amongst other things; “but he is obliged, or fancies himself obliged, which is all the same thing, to stay in town about this Crichton legacy!”

“A legacy? To Lord Hollingsford? I am so glad!”

“Don’t be in a hurry to be glad! It’s nothing for him but trouble. Did not you hear of that rich eccentric Mr. Crichton, who died some time ago, and—fired by the example of Lord Bridgewater, I suppose—left a sum of money in the hands of trustees, of whom my brother is one, to send out a man with a thousand fine qualifications, to make a scientific voyage, with a view to bringing back specimens of the fauna of distant lands, and so forming the nucleus of a museum which is to be called the Crichton Museum, and so perpetuate the founder’s name. Such various forms does man’s vanity take! Sometimes it simulates philanthropy; sometimes a love of science!”

“It seems to me a very laudable and useful object, I am sure,” said Mrs. Gibson, safely.

“I dare say it is, taking it from the public-good view. But it is rather tiresome to us privately, for it keeps Hollingsford in town—or between it

and Cambridge—and each place as dull and empty as can be, just when we want him down at the Towers. The thing ought to have been decided long ago, and there's some danger of the legacy lapsing. The two other trustees have run away to the Continent, feeling, as they say, the utmost confidence in him, but in reality shirking their responsibilities. However, I believe he likes it, so I ought not to grumble. He thinks he is going to be very successful in the choice of his man—and he belongs to this county, too,—young Hamley of Hamley, if he can only get his college to let him go, for he's a Fellow of Trinity, Senior Wrangler or something; and they're not so foolish as to send their crack man to be eaten up by lions and tigers!"

"It must be Roger Hamley!" exclaimed Cynthia, her eyes brightening, and her cheeks flushing.

"He's not the eldest son; he can scarcely be called Hamley of Hamley!" said Mrs. Gibson.

"Hollingford's man is a Fellow of Trinity, as I said before."

"Then it is Mr. Roger Hamley," said Cynthia; "and he's up in London about some business! What news for Molly when she comes home!"

"Why, what has Molly to do with it?" asked Lady Harriet. "Is——?" and she looked into Mrs. Gibson's face for an answer. Mrs. Gibson in reply gave an intelligent and very expressive glance at Cynthia, who however did not perceive it.

"Oh, no! not at all"—and Mrs. Gibson nodded a little at her daughter, as much as to say, "If any one, that."

Lady Harriet began to look at the pretty Miss Kirkpatrick with fresh interest; her brother had spoken in such a manner of this young Mr. Hamley that every one connected with the *Phœnix* was worthy of observation. Then, as if the mention of Molly's name had brought her afresh into her mind, Lady Harriet said,—"And where is Molly all this time? I should like to see my little mentor. I hear she is very much grown since those days."

"Oh! when she once gets gossiping with the Miss Brownings, she never knows when to come home," said Mrs. Gibson.

"The Miss Brownings? Oh! I am so glad you named them! I am very fond of them. Pecksy and Flapsy; I may call them so in Molly's absence. I'll go and see them before I go home, and then perhaps I shall see my dear little Molly too. Do you know, Clare, I have quite taken a fancy to that girl!"

So Mrs. Gibson, after all her precautions, had to submit to Lady Harriet's leaving her half-an-hour earlier than she otherwise would have done in order to "make herself common" (as Mrs. Gibson expressed it) by calling on the Miss Brownings.

But Molly had left before Lady Harriet arrived.

Molly went the long walk to the Holly Farm to order the damsons out of a kind of penitence. She had felt conscious of anger at being sent out of the house by such a palpable manœuvre as that which her step-

mother had employed. Of course she did not meet Cynthia, so she went alone along the pretty lanes, with grassy sides and high hedge-banks not at all in the style of modern agriculture. At first she made herself uncomfortable with questioning herself as to how far it was right to leave unnoticed the small domestic failings—the webs, the distortions of truth which had prevailed in their household ever since her father's second marriage. She knew that very often she longed to protest, but did not do it, from the desire of sparing her father any discord; and she saw by his face that he, too, was occasionally aware of certain things that gave him pain, as showing that his wife's standard of conduct was not as high as he would have liked. It was a wonder to Molly if this silence was right or wrong. With a girl's want of toleration, and want of experience to teach her the force of circumstances, and of temptation, she had often been on the point of telling her stepmother some forcible home truths. But possibly her father's example of silence, and often some piece of kindness on Mrs. Gibson's part (for after her way, and when in a good temper, she was very kind to Molly), made her hold her tongue.

That night at dinner Mrs. Gibson recounted the conversation between herself and Lady Harriet, giving it a very strong individual colouring, as was her wont, and telling nearly the whole of what had passed, although implying that there was a great deal said that was so purely confidential, that she was bound in honour not to repeat it. Her three auditors listened to her without interrupting her much—indeed, without bestowing extreme attention on what she was saying, until she came to the fact of Lord Hollingsford's absence in London, and the reason for it.

"Roger Hamley going off on a scientific expedition!" exclaimed Mr. Gibson, suddenly awakened into vivacity.

"Yes. At least it is not settled finally; but as Lord Hollingsford is the only trustee who takes any interest—and being Lord Cumnor's son—it is next to certain."

"I think I must have a voice in the matter," said Mr. Gibson; and he relapsed into silence, keeping his ears open, however, henceforward.

"How long will he be away?" asked Cynthia. "We shall miss him sadly."

Molly's lips formed an acquiescing yes to this remark, but no sound was heard. There was a buzzing in her ears as if the others were going in with the conversation, but the words they uttered seemed indistinct and blurred; they were merely conjectures, and did not interfere with the one great piece of news. To the rest of the party she appeared to be eating her dinner as usual, and, if she were silent, there was one listener the more to Mrs. Gibson's stream of prattle, and Mr. Gibson's and Cynthia's remarks.



The English Drama during the Reigns of Elizabeth and James.

PART II.

In some respects the comic drama is less important than the higher sphere of tragedy, although from it we gain a better knowledge of the customs and opinions of society. The peculiar fashions, follies, and fancies of an age are seen best in its comedies. In England, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, two distinct kinds of comic composition prevailed. These may be called the Comedy of the Imagination and the Comedy of Manners. In point of art, the former was the highest, and in this department Shakspeare reigned supreme. To call the *Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, by the same name as that which we ascribe to the plays of Aristophanes, Molière, and Sheridan, is a mistake in literature. No theatre in any other age has produced works of such pure creative fancy. They carry us into the very realm of the ideal, representing men and women purged from human weakness, whose vices we do not censure so harshly as those of real life, and whose actions have a grace and charm beyond that of this world. Shakspeare probably derived his style of comedy from the masques and shows which were so much in vogue, and which adhered but slightly to the incidents of human life. How he meant them to be interpreted may be gathered from the fanciful introduction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, from the name of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, from the magic of Prospero, and from the woodland solitudes of *As You Like It*. He expressly avoids in these creations the ordinary paths of men. No one followed Shakspeare closely in this sphere of Art, though Beaumont and Fletcher certainly were authors of imaginative comedy. These dramatists borrowed greatly from Spanish sources, and the cast of their genius was so light and graceful that it gave a charm to everything they touched. The remote scenes in which they placed the action of their plays, and the fluency of thought, fertility of invention, and exquisite poetic ease with which they wrought and carried out their plots, raise their comedies far above the common level, and give them the right to rank with Shakspeare's. For the forms of Art and for fidelity to fact Beaumont and Fletcher cared but little. They sought for striking situations, unexpected catastrophes, and occasions for displaying their command of dialogue. They were too rapid in execution to attend to details; and their plays, in consequence, are often ill-compacted, languid in development, and hurried in conclusion. But they knew the secret of

exciting interest by inexhaustible combinations of novel effects, depending more upon variety of incident than upon analysis of character. Mere spontaneity of genius and an unwearied flow of animal spirits seem to have been the source of their success. Poetry overflows their pages, appearing in and out of season like the improvisations of a clever and exhilarated musician, who does not care to dwell so much upon the simple expression of pure feeling, or to assume the dignity of science, as to surprise his hearers by perpetual sallies of fresh fancy, and to charm them by the melodious beauty of mere ornament. Truth can only be found in nice gradations and in delicate analyses. And this is very certain of dramatic composition. No characters so broadly sketched and coarsely executed as those of Fletcher are like nature. They are for the most part types and symbols, exaggerated humours, or fanciful personifications of bare possibilities. We lack in them the profound effect which is produced by the deliberate exhibition of contending passions, of crime pursued with hesitation and remorse, and of virtue slowly sapped, and yielding to renewed solicitations. The characters of Beaumont and Fletcher have always taken their part upon the side of good or evil. They stick to their colours with unflinching tenacity, or abandon them with inconceivable precipitation; we look upon these men and women as the phantoms of a pantomime, as airy creatures of a reverie, who, doing right or wrong, are moved by the mere springs of fancy, and who feel no moral responsibilities like those of real life. In this respect the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher resemble Shakspeare's comedies. But while their phantasmagoric creations reveal to us only the outward show of things, and play upon the surface of human nature, Shakspeare's comedies unfold the very soul of man made magically perfect, and his imagination freed from all impediments to its aerial flight. Sir Thomas Browne has said—"We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleep;" and these words might be applied to Shakspeare's comedies. There we move in a land of dreams, peopled by shapes greater and more beautiful than those of common life, lighted by larger suns that shine through purer air—visions reflected on the mirror of the mind which adds prismatic colours to the forms that it enlarges to a shadowy magnificence.

Very different is the Comedy of Manners. Here we gain a simple transcript of daily life in London. All the English dramatists wrote plays in this style. Most of them are very tedious now to read, and very coarse. It is hardly possible to comprehend how the ladies of the court of Elizabeth could have sat by to witness buffoonery so gross, and to hear language so obscene. Yet they must even have enjoyed them; for masques and comic interludes, which were designed especially for the queen's honour, are full of jests that clowns and coal-heavers would hiss down now in a country circus. These comedies turn for the most part upon the contrast between court and city. The pranks of fine gentlemen, and the knaveries of sharpers, supply them with incidents. They describe all the reverses of fortune to which a man is rendered liable by a profligate life. The persons whom we find in them are not unlike those of Terence and

Plautus—a jealous husband, a wilful wife, a stupid country squire, a parasite, a humorous serving-man, a supple courtier, a simple girl, a Frenchman, and a gallant. The dramatists, when engaged upon such pieces, did not aim at poetry, or subtle fancy. They sought success by introducing plenty of broad fun, ludicrous incidents, biting satire, and broadly defined characters. They threw them off very rapidly, nor did they care to preserve them for posterity. Marston in his preface to the *Fawne* apologizes for its publication: "If any shall wonder why I print a comedy, whose life rests much in the actor's voice, let such know that I cannot avoid publishing." He alludes to the booksellers' practice of taking down plays by short-hand, and so presenting them to the world in a pirated and garbled state. He makes the same defence before the *Malcontent*: "Only one thing affects me: to think that scenes invented merely to be spoken, should be inforcively published to be read." So truly did "the life of these things consist in action," that long passages were often left for the extempore declamation of the actors. Sometimes the whole conduct of the piece depended on their improvisation. They were then provided with programmes of the acts and scenes, and of the exits, entrances, and characters of the persons to be represented. These programmes got the name of "Platt," from which we derive the word "plot." They were hung up on the screenwork of the stage for the performers to study and refer to. This practice seems to have been derived from Italy, where such an outline of a comedy was called "Scenario." It is difficult to understand how several actors in one company could have been found sufficiently clever to impersonate impromptu parts; how all of them managed to carry out the same conception of a plot, and how each spoke his own speech without interfering with that of his neighbour. It must, however, be remembered that acting was then studied as a profession even more than it is now. A traditional handling of these extempore pieces, a repetition of stock jests and actions, and an acquired feeling for the due proportion of different parts to one another, must have simplified their difficulty. In England they were never so common as they seem to have been in Italy and France. Yet the effect even of our written comedies must have depended in a great measure on the excellence of the actors of the day. The old customs of maintaining jesters in castles or at court, had formed a class of men whose profession it was to entertain people with their comic acting, mimickry, and sharp sayings. Continued through many centuries, the skill of these Fools had been carried to a high degree of perfection by long practice, by the handing down of traditional habits of buffoonery, and by the emulation which inspired each succeeding jester to surpass his predecessor. Thus the playwrights found a band of able actors ready to express what they had written. Such men were Tarleton, Green, Kempe, and Robert Wilson, who sometimes, beside acting other people's comedies, went so far as to embody their own jokes in little scenes and farces. In the hands of Dekker and Massinger, the Comedy of Manners received a higher treatment. The

City Madam, and a *New Way to Pay Old Debts*, are among the most subtle and delicate productions of dramatic genius. Nor were the ~~fluent~~ plays of Middleton without their charm of easy movement and light humour. But it was from Ben Jonson that their style received its loftiest form. His comedies in their way, as truly as those of Shakspeare, are the productions of indubitable and peculiar genius. He never wrote at random. He never sought to please the populace by exhibitions of buffoonery. Nor could he succeed in riveting their attention upon the ponderous merriment of his "learned sock." Yet those who did not admire his muse he treated with contempt, and pursued his own designs, writing satires on his brother poets and scorning—

The loathed stage,
And the more loathsome age,
Where pride and impudence in faction knit,
Usurp the chair of wit.

Jonson was essentially a moralist and a philosopher, expressing through the medium of the drama the results of his inquiries into human nature. The end of poetry, in his opinion, was "to inform men in the best reason of living;" and he wrote systematically, deducing his characters from some conception of a particular attribute of strength or weakness, of vice or virtue, and building up his plots with the tremendous machinery of learning and the vast intellectual resources which he could command. Unlike the imaginative comic poets, he adhered to scenes of common life; and, deviating from the spirit of the school he had adopted, he portrayed, not the broad and general aspects of humanity, but its exaggerated and unusual eccentricities. Therefore the name of Humour, which we find so often on his lips, may be taken as the keynote to his conception of character.

Comedy was scattered up and down our great dramas. This peculiarity of the English stage may be attributed, as we shall see hereafter, to the influence of Miracle Plays, and also to the intense realism of our art. It has been most commonly objected against Shakspeare that he introduces ribald clowns and gravediggers and porters into the stately scenes of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*; and commentators, when surveying Massinger and Fletcher, have felt sorely puzzled whether to call certain dramas tragedies or comedies or tragic-comedies, according to the preponderance of humour and pathos in their scenes. It is not a little amusing to think of critics like Seward trying to classify by rules of Aristotle plays so burdened with conflicting passions and incongruous elements. Our dramatists sought to display human life, just as they found it, with all its lights and shades, in its depth as well as in its height, nor did they fail to draw sublime and terrible effects from the juxtaposition of the pathetic and the ludicrous, of tears and laughter, of purity and coarseness, of high-souled unselfishness and grovelling sensuality, which everywhere the world presents.

Allied in character to comedy were the pastorals and masques in which our ancestors delighted. No court festivals; no rejoicings in maner-

house and castle; no civic pomps; no ceremonies at the university, were held complete without a gorgeous show of shepherds, allegories, gods and goddesses. In their partiality for these exhibitions the English shared the taste of Europe. Like all fashions of the time, masques came originally from Italy. Marlowe says—

I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows.

The Spaniards adopted them with great splendour, and English nobles spent vast sums of money in vying with the Continental courts. How magnificent and how lengthy were these triumphs may be gathered from the picture which Scott has drawn in *Kenilworth*. The greatest architects and painters deigned to devise the machinery and decoration of the shows. Piero di Cosimo and Granacci painted the cars of Florentine revellers. Heywood speaks thus of one of his own masques : "For the rare decorements which now apparell'd it, when it came the second time to the royal view, I cannot pretermit to give a due character to that admirable artist, Mr. Inigo Jones, who, to every act, nay, almost to every scene, by his excellent imitations, gave extraordinary lustre, upon every occasion changing the stage to the admiration of all beholders." The resources of our theatre were remarkably limited. It is, therefore, probable that the splendour of these shows consisted chiefly in the multitude of actors who came upon the stage, and in the variety and quaintness of their dresses. The best poets were called upon to write words for the actors. Heywood dramatized nearly all the stories you may find in Lemprière, in four long plays upon the Golden, Silver, Brass, and Iron Ages. The legend of Cupid and Psyche he embodied in another plethoric play. Sometimes the Virtues spoke. Sometimes wood-nymphs crowned Oriana. Sometimes the languages and sciences contended for pre-eminence. There was no end to the subjects of these allegories.

In order more thoroughly to understand the spirit of the English stage, we must glance at the men who wrote for it, the audience, and the theatre in which they were assembled. The patrons of the drama, we have already seen, were the people, not the court as in the case of Spain and France, nor the universities. The people had become accustomed to theatrical exhibitions through the mediæval custom of representing the chief facts of Biblical History in a dramatic form. These Miracle Plays, or Mysteries, were shown in every town, sometimes by monks within the precinct of the church, sometimes by 'prentice lads and citizens upon the market-place. Their origin was very ancient. The Italian, Spanish, French, and German nations were no less partial to them than the English. In the Tyrol we may see them acted to this day, and at Rome about the time of the Epiphany some remnants of the custom linger still in the Church of Ara Coeli. The name Mystery, which we share in common with the French, has been derived from Ministerium. The Spaniards called them Autos. But in no country did they exercise so powerful an influence upon the secular drama as in England. The Miracle Plays of Coventry, Chester,

and Widkirk Abbey have been preserved. From these we understand how they educated the imagination of the audience, and how they introduced that mixture of comic and serious subjects which became so prominent in English art. In these plays, by help of the very smallest scenic illusion, countryfolk and children from the street were shown the armies of the angels, God the Father on his throne, the patriarchs and women of old time, the life and death of Christ, the Judgment, and the terror of Hell. Their language is always familiar and grotesque. We should call it impious and profane. The three persons of the Trinity converse together. Satan appears and capers before them with knavish tricks and ribald words to make the people laugh. On one occasion the Father is represented sleeping at the moment of the crucifixion. An angel wakes him up, and asks whether he is not ashamed to doze at such a time. Herod always appeared in a great rage, with a huge nose and a boy beside him shaking rattles in his ear to goad him to the proper pitch of fury. The plan of these plays was generally vast. It began with Creation and ended with the Judgment, having traversed the whole extent of religious history. Between scenes of a graver character, comic interludes relieved the attention of the audience. For instance, in the Widkirk plays, Noah beats his wife because, after a long altercation, she refuses to enter the ark, and Joseph plays the jealous husband when he hears of Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary. A very ludicrous episode occurs before the scene of the Nativity, which consists of a discussion between some shepherds about a lamb which one of them has stolen. They are all called by common rustic names, and allusion is frequently made to customs of the English country.

The people, used to such exhibitions, acquired great aptitude for understanding plays. They did not need the elaborate decorations, accurate costumes, and other aids to the imagination which we find upon our theatres. A wooden platform with a few curtains and placards hung out to indicate the scene of action, was enough to carry them away to Rome, Jerusalem, or farthest India. The stage properties were very simple. In Henlowe's Inventory we find mention of only two pieces of moveable scenery—"the city of Rome" and "the cloth of the Sun and Moon;" but these even probably were mere emblems. Rocks, trees, dragons, steeples, and hellmouths we also hear about. Such objects were, no doubt, familiarly known and conventionally represented, according to the practice of the Miracles. It must, however, be remembered that between the time of Bale, who wrote the last Mysteries, and that of Inigo Jones, who decorated Heywood's masque of *Love's Mistress*, a considerable period had passed away, during which theatrical appliances had become more elaborate. The speeches of the actors and their gestures suggested all the local colouring which we put visibly before the eyes of the spectators. And this poverty of mechanical contrivances acted like a whetstone to the genius of the authors. They knew that on their use of language alone depended the success or failure of their plays. They were not hampered

by the demands of stage-managers and scene-painters for novel effects and striking tableaux. They only sought to stimulate the minds of those that heard their works, and to communicate to them by means of words some portion of the vivid pictures which appeared to their own fancy. Thus the splendid diction of our ancient dramatists, and the overflowing poetry of their descriptions, were fostered by the necessity each author felt of clearly summoning the scene before his eyes, and of translating the impressions it produced into language fit to rouse a like sense in his audience. The same freedom from stage scenery rendered him indifferent to unities of time and place. Each play was a creature of the imagination, and the mind can traverse the wilds of Asia or fix itself in more familiar scenes at will.

Nor did the actors derive less benefit from the simplicity of their stage. They were not lost upon the mighty wilderness of boards which modern actors tread, nor did gigantic representations of trees and houses and mountains dwarf their forms, drown their voices, and distract the eyes of the spectators from their gestures. They moved about upon a narrow space in full view of the assembled people. There was nothing to aid, there was nothing to impede their action. The poet's words alone were the medium through which their audience had to be impressed. Very often the actor was the author of the lines which he repeated. In this double capacity the practical acquaintance which he gained upon the stage directed his genius in the hours of composition, while the inspiration which enabled him to conceive a character, animated his impersonation of the same. In thinking of our Elizabethan drama, we must never forget the thorough sympathy which subsisted between the author and his audience, the simplicity of the stage, and the excellence of the actors. These three conditions favoured the colossal development which dramatic art attained in that age. Now they are no more. The lively interest, vivid passions, and quick fancy of those spectators can never be found within the pit or boxes of a modern house. Actor and author are both oppressed by mechanical ghosts, lime lights, dissolving views, and gorgeous landscapes. You can scarcely discern the pigmy stature of the one, or the small wit of the other, amid the blaze of light and colour which the mechanist throws round them.

In the lives of the dramatists themselves there was an intensity which communicated itself to their works. Most of them had risen from the ranks of the people. Marlowe was a cobbler's son. Ben Jonson was a mason. Shakespeare was the son of a woolseller, and Massinger of a domestic servant. Through the liberality of patrons and scholastic endowments, they received a learned education at the Universities, and then, pursued by debts and ill-repute, or simply from the love of the stage, they found their way to London, and adopted the profession of dramatic authors. First they became adapters of old plays, then playwrights on their own account, actors in small parts, or heroes of their own productions, proprietors of theatres, and shareholders in joint companies. These dramatists formed the first set of professional literary men. They were

ready to turn their abilities to any intellectual work, and lived entirely by their wits. Careless of posthumous fame, and simply anxious to earn money, they often worked in concert, confusing their own creations with those of brother authors. Of Thomas Heywood it is told that, beside acting, he wrote every day a page or two of some dramatic work, and left at his death 220 pieces. Many lines, perhaps, of *The Woman Killed with Kindness* have been jotted down at odd moments in the hubbub of a wretched tavern. A notion of his fertility and quickness of composition may be gained from a note appended to his "Nine Books of Various History concerning Women," a folio volume of 466 pages, in which he says, "Opus excogitatum, inchoatum, explicitum, et typographo excusum inter septemdecim septimanas." Decker passed three years in the prison of King's Bench. Massinger lived all his life in distressed circumstances, writing incessantly for bread, and begging money in most piteous tones from his noble patrons. Almost all of them were in the hands of Henslowe, an old usurer, and proprietor of the Fortune theatre. He lent them money and received their MSS. and clothes in pawn. For plays he would allow them prices varying from 7*l.* to 20*l.*, according to their quality, and to the fluctuations of the stage. Actors received a few shillings weekly, and some interest in the general receipts of the theatre. This money was spent without prudence, as they received it, in mere rioting and prodigality. The dramatists were very children in their self-indulgences, nor did their station in society rouse self-respect, or stimulate ambition in their souls. Though protected by royal charters, theatres depended for their existence upon the caprice of a monarch or his ministers. A large and influential body in the state were always attacking them as sources of public corruption. Playwrights and actors were regarded in the light of what Tacitus would call the "instrumenta libidinis et voluptatis" of the upper classes. In times of plague, or when the town was made too hot to hold them, they had to march about "on the hard hoof" from town to town. From the language which Shakespeare uses of himself in the Sonnets, it may be seen in what low esteem the "poor players" and their authors were held. The aristocracy looked down on them, while they beguiled their leisure moments with the products of their genius. They enrolled them among their servants, sometimes patting them and treating them with kindness, but soon forgetting their existence. The sensibilities of these poets were exposed to the rudest shocks. Their artistic love of pleasure had to be gratified in the lowest haunts of profligacy. They spent their time with women of bad character, with sharpers, thieves, and young men of loose life. Kyd died in poverty. Massinger went to his grave unrecognized, and in the register which notes his death, was entered, "Philip Massinger, a stranger." A ruffian murdered Marlowe in a tavern brawl. Peele hastened his end by debauchery, and succumbed at last to a horrible disease. Nash, the satirist, their comrade in vice, confessed that he had abused his talents and conspired with atheists and prodigals. But no picture of a mad, wicked, turbulent life, and of a terrible end, is

equal to that which Robert Greene has given of his own. We gather it from his prose tales and autobiographical papers, and from the address which he wrote on his deathbed to Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele: After leaving Cambridge he tells us that he travelled through Spain and Italy with some congenial comrades, "consuming the flower of his youth, and seeing and practising such villany as is abominable to declare." When he returned to England he took up his residence in London with people of bad character, and learned the tricks of thieves and sharpers. These he afterwards exposed in a curious pamphlet, called *A Notable Discovery of Coosnage*. "In London," he says, "I was drowned in pride. Gluttony with drunkenness was my only delight. Young in years, though old in wickedness, I became an author of plays, and a penner of love pamphlets." In the midst of the confession of these faults he describes the gnawing of his conscience and the dread of damnation which a sermon that he heard impressed upon his mind. When he tried to repent, his old companions taunted him and lured him back to dissipation. He was deserted by his virtuous friends and became a blasphemer of God. In this narrative we see the man himself openly disclosed to us in the strength of his passions and the weakness of his will, in his dread of judgment, and his impotence to lead a better life. Suddenly, under the influence of nobler aspirations, he marries a woman of good family and gentle breeding. But the old devil returns and persuades him to desert his wife, and squander her fortune among vagabonds and gamblers. A sister of a condemned felon bears him a son at this period of his life, whom he names "Infortunatus." Yet even in this utter degradation, noble speeches, sweet songs of pastoral life, pathetic tales of love and innocence, and delicate descriptions of natural beauty, flow from his pen. His soul is like a battlefield in which the good and evil strive for mastery, or like a hideous ruin overgrown with weeds, but visited by gleams of heavenly sunshine. The last act of Greene's life is the most piteous of all. We find him alone, attended only by a poor cordwainer's wife, unable from the lack of clothes to leave his bed, and dying of a surfeit. None of his boon companions visit him; but he remembers their bad lives, and warns them passionately to flee the wrath which has descended on his head. We possess this letter to his friends, and also one in which he addressed his injured wife. When Greene was dead, his landlady who had nursed him, and to whom he owed ten pounds, placed a wreath of bays upon his head and buried him. His funeral cost her four shillings for his winding-sheet, and six shillings and fourpence for the burial dues. She sold his sword and doublet for three shillings.

Such were the men who wrote the multitude of plays of which we have a scanty remnant, men with whom Shakspeare lived and thought and worked, who knew him familiarly, who classed him with Heywood and Dekker, who praised him for "his right happy and copious industry," or who, like Ben Jonson, wished that he had learned to decimate his lines. When we reflect upon their lives, we are stirred with wonder at the vast activity of their intellect. They thought and felt with

energy. They used their vigour in rivalry with one another and in most laborious studies. They squandered their health on pleasures of the most exciting kind. Yet those who were not cut off by disease lived long and never idle lives. The force of their brains must have been prodigious. It must be remembered that men had but just turned their attention to literary pursuits, and that the intellects of previous generations had not been debilitated by continual studies or a sedentary life. On the contrary, the dramatists were descended from ancestors who led an animal existence, breeding strong passions during the wars of many centuries, and storing up physical energy in agricultural and other out-of-door pursuits. Nor must it be supposed that all of them were so indigent and profligate as those we have described. Out of the thirty eminent dramatists and the minor ones who during more than half a century wrote for the eleven theatres of London, many were men of good repute, and some were distinguished by their noble birth. Beaumont and Fletcher both sprang from gentle families. So did Davenant and Killigrew. Ford was a respectable lawyer, and Webster a grave and thoughtful man. Lodge became an eminent physician. Ben Jonson, though poor and eccentric in his habits, won the respect of all classes, and was a friend of gentlemen and scholars. Chapman is represented to us as a literary courtier of the most refined description. These men among themselves enjoyed the charms of thoroughly congenial society. They met at the Mermaid or some other tavern, under the dictatorship of Jonson, conversed, and called each other by familiar names. Heywood, in some genial verses, has enumerated all the Toms and Jacks, the Kits and Franks and Robins, of these friendly meetings. He says,—

Mellifluous Shakspere, whose enchanting quill
Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will;
And famous Jonson, though his learned pen
Be dipt in Castaly, is still but Ben.

It may readily be understood that jealousies sprang up between them. The quarrels of Jonson and Marston are well known. But they seem to have been amicably adjusted, and on the appearance of some new play by one of the society, the other poets greeted it with commendatory verses. It is remarkable that though Shakspere received many of these marks of admiration, not a single line of praise conferred by him upon a brother bard has been preserved to us. Still, notwithstanding this brighter aspect of theatrical society, the tone of the stage was determined by men like Greene and Marlowe; nor can we fail to sympathize to some extent with the furious onslaught made by Prynne and other puritans upon their evil lives and influence. It is to be regretted that in the zeal of these reformers, many works of English genius have been lost irretrievably.

Notwithstanding the great powers of our dramatists, the stage could not have been developed without an audience eager in its interests, intelligent in its sympathy with the authors, and capable of stimulating them in their exertions. The public to which they appealed was the

whole English nation, from Elizabeth down to the lowest ragamuffin of the streets. In the same wooden theatres sat lords and ladies, citizens and common porters, sailors, pickpockets, and countryfolk. The houses were of two kinds, public and private, the difference between them being that the former were larger and more rude, being only partly covered in by a thatched shed or "heaven," and partly open to the air, while the latter were small and entirely enclosed. By paying a penny you were admitted to the yard, an open space in the centre of the house, where people stood and walked about. Only the lower classes frequented this part of the theatre, whence came the name of "groundling." Galleries and private boxes, which they also called "rooms," were reserved for families who paid a little more. But the most distinguished seat of all was on the stage itself, where young men sat and showed their finery, and smoked, and laughed, and mocked the actors. They were provided for a shilling with three-legged stools, or else they lay upon their cloaks. Often these gallants disturbed the play so much that the groundlings in the yard would pelt them with stones and oranges, and not unfrequently they came to blows. Or perhaps the actors were at fault, and then the people cried out, and got upon the boards and beat them off, or pulled the woodwork of the theatre about their ears. Before the curtain rose the audience ate and drank, flirted and played at cards, groaned and mewed like cats, and made a hubbub far worse than one may hear at Astley's now-a-days. The exhibitions took place always in the afternoon. The smaller covered theatres were illuminated by torches and candles. The larger houses needed no artificial light. Wet or fine, the audience did not care. They stood up happy in hot sun or drenching rain upon the mud-floor of the yard, to gaze upon the state of Tamburlaine, or to listen to the soliloquies of Hamlet. All the theatres were situated in low parts of the city near the Thames. They were frequently burned down and easily rebuilt, resembling nothing better than the sheds and awnings of a country circus. It is clear from this description how genuine must have been the inspiration of poets who could write for such a stage, and how strong were the interests of an audience who could tolerate its inconvenience and understand its aims.

In tracing the circumstances under which our theatre was developed, it has been impossible to take more than a rapid and passing glance at the works of those great dramatic poets who surrounded Shakspeare, and who with him exerted so powerful an influence over the formation of our language and our literature. We are too apt to forget that any authors held the stage except him whom England and the world has idolized. This, however, is an error of our indolence. In his lifetime he seemed one among many, pre-eminent it is true, but as a colleague rather than as a king. Even now, in looking back upon the period, we can trace the brilliancy of many planets hardly inferior to the sun whose name was Shakspeare.

How Well Did Mont Blanc.

THE ascent of Mont Blanc is usually called a very cockney affair. Moreover, it has been talked about, and written about, and lectured about, till one might suppose that every part of the mountain, from the Hotel in Chamonix to the summit of the Calotte, was as well known to the British public as the hills which stand about London. But one member, at least, of the British public, had always found it impossible to make out, from any of the numerous histories of ascents, what there really was of difficulty, and what of danger, in reaching the highest point of Europe; and with the view of satisfying himself on this question he determined upon trying to accomplish the task. The training gone through in preparation for the struggle amounted to two days on a sofa in Geneva, with threatenings of bilious fever, and incessant attention to a leg which medical skill said *might* be patched up sufficiently for ordinary walking—these being the results of many hot, fatiguing days among the lower mountains, and corresponding nights of unsuccessful skirmishing with the population of Continental beds.

Call this ill-trained person, ignorant of glaciers, G., and his companion, a young fellow of seventeen, who had spent a fortnight in creditable ice excursions, II. The guide was a Zermatt man, whom they had taken with them to Chamonix, and when P. P. are given as his initials any connoisseur of high mountains will know that a better guide could not have been found. As a cheerful practical proof of the absence of danger in the ascent, there arrived simultaneously at Chamonix the complete leg and foot of one of the party lost in 1820, which had been found that afternoon on the Glacier des Boissons, and was exhibited to the new arrivals before burial.

It had been intended to take one porter from Chamonix to the sleeping place on the Grands Mulets, to carry the necessary provisions, and another to accompany the party to the summit as under-guide.. But when they applied at the bureau for a porter, the *chef-guide* proved to G. with much politeness, from the printed regulations, that it was impossible to attempt the ascent without one guide and one porter for each monsieur. The *règlement* declares that this number is necessary for *courses dangereuses*. G. claimed exemption on the ground that, as no one could call the Mont Blanc a dangerous course, the rule must have been made for the Breven or the Mauvais Pas. But when politeness and reason have failed with a Frenchman, chaff is scarcely likely to succeed, and the *chef* merely bowed stiffly, and remarked that if monsieur would pardon him, the Mont Blanc was the most dangerous of the many *courses*

dangereuses of the *règlement*, and he could not possibly supply less than three men to assist P. P.

P. P. being a Swiss, and therefore impatient of interference with the liberty of mankind, agreed with the Herrs that under no circumstances would they submit, after he had vainly suggested that as one of the members of the Alpine Club had the same name as G., the difficulty might be evaded, for members of that Club can take what number of guides they choose. When he had listened to a homily on the immorality of his suggestion, he made off into the village, and by good fortune found a Courmayeur man, who was on the point of returning home. This man was of course not bound by the laws of the place respecting guides and porters for Mont Blanc, and he agreed to make a fourth to the summit, and to carry his share of food and night-clothing to the Grands Mulets; but the *chef-guide* heard of the arrangement in some roundabout way, and illegally captured and concealed the Courmayeur man, and so reduced the party to their elements again. Fortune did not therefore cease to smile upon their efforts, for P. P. discovered a master-shoemaker who was anxious to make the ascent, and would be only too glad to accompany the party *pour son plaisir*, and carry half the things. Of course he was to be paid something, privately, but for all public purposes he was a gentleman at large, and the *chef-guide* dared not meddle with him. And thus they were at length complete, one guide, two Herrs, and one master-shoemaker.

The amount of food to be carried may be imagined from the following copy of the bill:—

PROVISIONS : MONT BLANC.

	Fr.	Ct.		Fr.	Ct.
Thé	5	0	Brought forward.....	43	50
Café	5	0	Fromage	2	0
Sucre	3	0	Pruneaux	3	0
Viande de bœuf	5	0	½ btlle. Cognac	4	50
Jambon	6	0	1 flacon Cognac	4	0
1 rôti de veau	6	0	7 bleas. vin ord.	7	0
2 gros poulets	10	0	1 bougie et 1 chandelle	1	50
Sel et poivre.....	0	50	Verres perdus	2	0
12 œufs	3	0	Gros et pt. pain	3	0
Carried forward	43	50		70	50

Ferdinand Eisenkraemer, of the Hôtel Royal, possesses, for three months in the year, a secretary, who manages all these matters. The guide of the party meditating an ascent goes to the bureau of this gentleman, and orders provisions for Mont Blanc for so many persons, and the secretary puts up what he thinks proper. It is evident, also, that he charges what he thinks proper. The present secretary is a schoolmaster, whose pupils are handed over to his wife for the Chamonix season, and let us hope that she inculcates those lessons of moderation and honesty which her husband is meanwhile putting in practice. He is a man of friendly manner, and of much imagination, which last has developed itself in a new table of

capacities, à propos to his arithmetical work with his pupils in the dull season. Two Swiss, he says in his heart, one Frank ; four Franks, one Boule. He therefore loves the English much, as a people of stomach and of purse,—nay, he not only loves, he worships the golden image. He believes, or professes to believe, that they can eat any amount of food when they make a *course*, and pay any amount of money for it when they return. The fervour with which he squeezes an English hand is but a faint shadowing forth of the operation he performs upon the purse. And yet there are immense charms in the Hôtel Royal at Chamonix, in the excellence and *négligée* of its table-d'hôte, the comfort of its beds, the picturesque undulations of its billiard-table, and the sublime glories of its mountain views.

The shoemaker was not promising, as far as personal appearance went. He was sickly and small, and had a large white nose, through which he snuffled when he was in pluck, and whined when he wasn't. His name, he said, was Friedrich Zimmerman, of Thun; on which G. informed him that, as a testimony to his pluck in thus attempting the ascent, he should be called, not Zimmerman, but Immer-mann—which seemed to delight him much, and add something to his stature and his step. He began at once to explain what must be done, on their return, to obtain the certificate of the *chef-guide*, which that exalted personage gives—for five francs—to all who make the ascent ; and when he was told that it would be time enough to talk about that when the ascent was made, he said proudly that he had already made a promenade to the Breven last year (5,000 feet above Chamonix,) without much fatigue, and had once reached St. Bernard in two days.

The seven bottles of vin ordinaire were in reality only six, and of these P. P. had decanted four into a waterproof bag, which in its turn was carried in a waterproof knapsack, and as the *verres perdus* of the bill represent the missing fabric of the remaining two, it would seem that empty bottles are a valuable property in France. Before they had gone far, P. P.'s back discovered that neither bag nor knapsack was wine-proof, and as Zimmerman began to find himself very hot, G. took charge of the coats of both. This slight relief was not of much use to the shoemaker when they reached the steep zigzags of the forest, and he walked last, and cried constantly, "Doucement ! doucement !" causing P. P. to become vocal with a song of two lines, repeated *ad libitum*—

Langsam voran ! langsam voran !
Damit der letzte Mann nachkommen kann !*

varied with prose declarations that a good guide's motto should always be,

* It is to be hoped that the shoemaker did not know the Folk-song of which this is possibly a corruption, for the comparison with the Austrian Landsturm would not have "kissed him,"—

"Nur immer langsam voran ! langsam voran !
Dass der Oestreicher Landsturm nachkommen kann ;
Die Oestreicher haben eine Schaus' erbaut
Aus leuter Speck und Sonnenkraut."

Langsam, aber immer. Still the shoemaker fell more and more behind, and it became evident that no amount of *langsam* would ensure the *nachkommen*: so a halt was called, and the bundle of rug and wraps transferred to G.'s back.

But all was of no avail, and within an hour and a quarter of Chamonix he came to a total stand. The knapsack of provisions was taken from him, and all that was his was eliminated from the bundle of wraps and thrown on to the zigzag way, and then he was ignominiously turned out of the party, and told that neither Zimmerman nor Immer-mann should henceforth be his name, but, instead, Nimmer-mann. P. P. said that a small auberge was being built higher up, and it might be possible to find a porter there, so he and G. made a division of the baggage, H. being by general consent too young for such work, and they once more started in hope.

At the Pierre Pointue a new and cheap and excellent little auberge was found, kept by Sylvain Couttet, and attended to by his pleasant wife. In future ascents, it will be a good plan to purchase all provisions here, and so avoid the extortions of Chamonix, and save the porters some of their toil. Sylvain was speedily persuaded to carry half the baggage to the Grands Mulets, and they went off across the rocks in high spirits, Nimmer-mann coming on still behind, with snuffling declarations that he would at least cross the glacier, and even bursting forth into a nasal song in proof of his restored pluck. But he was sternly bidden to cease—it was not for him, of all men, to dare to sing; and, as for the glacier, he should not put one foot upon it, with all those horrible crevasses.* And so he was half bullied, half frightened into returning with a party whom they found at the Pierre à l'Echelle, one of whom did his best to turn H. back because of the lightness of his clothing,* which had already stood the blustering cold of a storm on Monte Rosa; and another, a most agreeable Frenchman, showered evil omens on the expedition by persisting in calling P. P. Benin, and correcting himself each time with a shudder, and *Ah! ce pauvre Benin, il est mort!*† When P. P. heard that this gentleman was a member of the Alpine club, he added the word *Suisse* with much scorn, but his scorn became intense respect when he was told how worthily he had been elected into the English club. Good guides are too much in the way of affecting to despise this Swiss club. Thus a famous guide refused to accompany one of its officers, because, as he said, he found the

* This gentleman was afterwards proved, on unmistakable internal evidence, to be the author of several interesting papers on glacier excursions. In one of these he has described his outfit for Mont Blanc, which he believes cannot be improved upon:—“A merino waistcoat, then two light flannel shirts, chamois-leather waistcoat, and over these a double-breasted cloth waistcoat, a light kind of ‘lounging-coat,’ and light over-coat. For the nearer garments, a pair of stout trowsers, and two pairs of drawers.” The lightness of H.’s clothing might well surprise him. G., too, had only an old pair of trowsers, cut short at the knee, made of very thin flannel.

† Lost in an avalanche on the Haute de Cry, in the spring of 1864.

English club climbed better and paid better. Another guide tells that when his Herrs were dining in a certain hotel, members of the Swiss club sent a message from another hotel in the town, proposing fraternization. He answered that his Herrs were at dinner, and must not be disturbed; he would see about it after dinner. Meanwhile he paid a visit of inspection, and found that the Swiss gentlemen had umbrellas with spikes, paper pantofles, and black coats and trowsers—so he buried the message entirely.

Apropos of this story, when the present party met two foreign gentlemen, utterly done, on the Tête Noire, with black hats and patent leather boots, it was thoughtlessly and unkindly suggested that they were members of the Swiss Alpine Club, but the difficulty was—only one had an umbrella. “Ah!” it was still more unkindly explained, “it’s a swell taking his young friend over the Tête Noire pass, to qualify for the stock of the club.”

Certain young malcontents of the canton Valais have conceived a disapproval of the principles of this club, and propose to form a rival society. They are to perform real feats, so they say, in the way of ascents, and, to show their contempt for the pretensions of other clubs, are to call themselves the Order of the Broomstick, meaning the alpenstock, and their president the Grand Ramoneur. It might be suggested to them that if they would carry *brooms* also, as a part of the paraphernalia of the order, they might do something towards cleaning their native Valais, and then the travelling world would heartily wish them the success which attended an ancient hero in a similar labour.

The most interesting part of the whole ascent now commenced, across the shattered ice-fall of the Glacier des Boissons, and up the ice and snow to the Grands Mulets—a collection of rocks in the midst of the higher glaciers. A few minutes of jumping across crevasses, and winding along ice-bridges and up “vertical precipices” of the same material, sufficed to show that the danger here was simply nothing, as far as the fall of a man was concerned, unless he was very determinedly bent upon falling; but from P. P.’s *vite!* when the party passed the base of any of the overhanging pyramids of ice, it seemed that there was more room for a mischance there. Indeed, a very competent authority has laid it down as a law of nature—or, at least of the more adventurous members of the English Alpine Club—that the only danger in mountain climbing is from avalanches and falling stones and ice; for the guides have too strong an affection for their own necks—or, shall we say, for their wives and little children?—to put themselves in positions beyond their skill.

Perhaps the most striking part of a tyro’s first extensive glacier lesson is the ease with which difficulties are circumvented, and the excellent foot-hold afforded by glacier ice. Nor is anything more instructive and assuring than the first fall. With a young horse at an early fence, and with young climbers on their first glacier, a fall is an excellent thing.

It teaches a man the wonderful use of the rope, and gives him thereby much confidence; and if, like the young horse, he is careless, which is not very probable, it teaches him also to look to his feet. He goes crashing down, with much clattering of icicles and the rattle of a truant alpenstock, and has about time to conceive the idea that he is gone for ever, when a sudden and unpleasant strain upon his waist pulls him up short, and he hangs for a moment all ways, like a wounded rook in a tree, till he is hauled up by his neighbours on the rope, regardless alike of the projecting keenness of ice-points and of the due precedence of head and feet.

When our friends had been an hour or so on the ice, they heard the cannon of Chamonix announcing the arrival at the Grands Mulets of a party which had left the other hotel an hour before them; and though the prolonged iniquities of the wretched Nimmer-mann had so much delayed them, they found on arriving that they had gained on the others. The great Murray says that the hut on the oasis of rocks is 10,000 feet above the sea; and, though the verbal inspiration of that book is the last theory a Swiss traveller is likely to take up, there seems to be no particular reason for doubting this measurement. But when it is added that "the excitement of sleeping out in the mountain is part of the interest of the adventure," the most diluted theory of inspiration is too strong. There are few places on the face of the earth more abominable than that little hut and its environs. When the present party reached it, they found two Englishmen already established there, with more than the Chamonix allowance: two guides, namely, and three porters; and three other porters had accompanied them to the Grands Mulets, and returned to Chamonix. The Englishmen had finished their meal, and were preparing for écarté—amiably converted into whist—on the stones outside; but the hut was pervaded by guides and porters in every stage of unpleasantness. There were wet boots and damp men smoking before the little stove, the men lying about uncouthly and uncourteously, doing their unpolished best to ignore the new arrivals, who were infringing every golden rule of Chamonix. No ascent had been this year made by the Grands Mulets, but there had been various attempts, and the disappointed travellers had left the débris of their meals to become unpleasant in every corner of the hut. Fourteen feet by seven is its size, and although its foulness cannot well be imagined, it may be more easily imagined than described. It was not much satisfaction to hear that Couttet had undertaken to build a better hut the next week, and that 120 guides and porters had promised to carry each one plank in solemn single file, a procession which would drain half Switzerland of rascality.* The new hut was to have two beds, and the old one to be left for the use of guides and porters only.

Tea is a beverage most refreshing on the mountains, and tea had been

* Not that this present writer believes, with so many of his countrymen, that Mont Blanc is in Switzerland.

looked forward to with much eagerness; but the opposition guides had possessed themselves of the only pan, and had commenced to make soup therein—soup which, even in its beginning, gave forth odours of a compound vileness which suggested what its maturer moments would be. As the time passed on—it was now five o'clock, and they had eaten nothing to speak of since an early breakfast—"Is the soup ready?" was constantly demanded from without, and "No" as constantly answered from within; not that the Herrs wanted the soup, but they did want the pan. Those five men must have denied themselves their soup for a good hour, that they might enjoy the thirst of the wretches who had dared to come on Chamonix ground, without a pack of Chamonix guides. And when the soup was made and swallowed, the snow was still to be dug for making the tea, and it seemed to be as obstinately slow in melting as the soup had been in making.

Meantime P. P. took an opportunity of representing to his Herrs that if there should arrive anything, three was not a good number. An injured man could not be left alone, and, on the other hand, it would not be well for one to go alone for help; so he strongly advised that, if possible, Couttet should be retained for the ascent. Now Couttet at the Grands Mulets was a man of higher price than Couttet under competition pressure, and so it came to pass that a long time was spent in making francs mean half francs, and then it was time for bed. The Chamonix men kept the places near the fire for their Herrs, and for two of themselves—the guides to wit; then the other Herrs reposed themselves, and then the remaining five; every one, of course, lying on the floor. But when the Herrs were settling down to dream of sleep, the guides, with one accord, got up to eat and drink and make a noise; and the clatter of bottles, and pots, and tongues, and the undulations of the floor on which the Herrs lay, as the heavy feet tramped up and down between the stove and the provision-shelf, to say nothing of more serious results when the feet were careless as well as heavy, banished all idea of sleep. Moreover, the damp and evil odour of the floor came recking through the rug, and added a yet viler group to the *mélange* of vile smells, while all the angular contents of the knapsacks rose to the upper side, and tested the hardness of the heads which lay thereon. And when the hunger of the guides was appeased, and their tongues became more still, and the candle was blown out, and peace by comparison seemed near at hand, an evil worse than all rose into being. Seven rough men, and one guilty Herr, sleeping, after a heavy supper, with their heads lower than their bodies, and their mouths open, produced a variety and an amount of noise utterly inconceivable. For some time G. tapped sharply on the floor with his heel at each crisis, and a prompt responsive thud told that a Chamonix man had interrupted his own snoring, and was taking it out of P. P.'s back, P. P. being a noted performer in that line; but nothing produced any permanent improvement, and G. and the unsuccessful smiter got up, and spent the remainder of the night in the open air.

The tender-hearted moon was lavish of her purest splendours to reconcile them to the cold, and the ice and snow thundered forth their most majestic harmonies, as they poured in white and sinuous bands down distant precipices of rock. The very vacuum was moved which years of the Chamonix tariff had created in the guide's breast, and he grunted his unfeigned assent, between prolonged whiffs of tobacco-smoke, to the proposition that, even if they saw nothing from the summit, the weird waste and weird crashes of ice and snow would amply repay their toil. As a rule, however, it is not fair to draw upon a guide for sentiment, as that commodity is not in the bond, and the *chef-guide* has no tariff price for it.

At a quarter to one they ventured to return to the hut, to rouse the various sources of sound into activity of a more useful kind; and the fire in the stove was easily restored to sufficient vigour to melt a fresh allowance of snow, and produce a decoction of tea. The five Chamonix men, with the assistance of the departed three, had brought, at their Herrs' expense, abundant food for holding the Grands Mulets for many days, and they now suggested to the owners of this extensive larder that it might be better to eat something. The other party also proceeded to make a selection from their more limited yet most magnificent store, but the vile air of the hut backed up P. P.'s cautious *nur ein wenig* only too decidedly. Then came the dressing for the ascent. P. P. possessed himself of his Herrs' boots, and ran melted candle on to every part of them, especially about the laces and the part by which boots are pulled on; and woollen helmets and magnified babies' gloves completed their preparation, except that G. was persuaded by P. P. to put on a thin Inverness cape, with the sleeves tied behind, and H. assumed a thicker scarf. The getting-up of the other party by their guides and porters was a sight to see, and P. P. sniffed a heterodox scorn in rare intervals of hard-boiled eggs. A Herr was caught, and extended on his back on the bench near the fire, with naked feet. Round each foot paper was then wrapped, made soft and binding with much candle, the head guide going through all the graces of a young hospital dresser who thinks he has a turn that way. Then, with much ceremony, the stockings were put on, and another layer of grease run in, produced by the application of candle-ends to the surface of the opportune stove. Then came the boots, stiff and white already with over-night grease, and coated now afresh. Over all, a pair of long brown cloth leggings, tied at top with gay red garters, with bows and flying ends. When all this was done, and the Herr turned off the bench, he not unnaturally remarked that it was as well he knew from previous knowledge which were his feet, for he had no present sensation to guide him in appropriating a pair.

These ceremonies occupied a considerable time, for the guides and porters seemed to think it right that each should do something, and it required a good deal of lengthy manœuvring and stage action to bring all five to bear upon one pair of feet; and when the feet were finished, long

after the patience of the other party, the head of the Chamonix men suggested to his accomplices, dubiously—like a man in a play—that they might, perhaps, eat a little of something: an operation which lasted a good half hour, and put out of sight much calf, and a family of cocks and hens. De Saussure was still more unfortunate, for his eighteen guides kept him till half-past six, quarrelling about the adjustment of the baggage, each fearing lest an extra half pound should make him the victim of a weak snow-bridge.

P. P. now informed his Herrs that the other guides had proposed that the two parties should start together, and each cut half the steps, to which he had agreed: so all the eleven, Herrs and guides and porters, scrambled down from the hut and bade farewell to the rock until their return to the Grands Mulets after eleven hours of ice and snow. The first cord held the party of seven: a guide at the head, then a Herr, then another guide, then the other Herr, and the three porters brought up the rear in a body. P. P. of course headed his own rope, with Couttet at the other end and the Herrs in the middle. It was curious to see the antics of the chief of the Chamonix guides. Taking his axe, stock downwards, between his finger and thumb, he pranced carefully off the rock and delicately felt and probed the snow, making a step in advance with the air of a man ready to do and die, but determined to do and die with science. Whether he impressed his own people, did not appear; but the party behind scoffed and moved onwards, and then he theatrically made up his mind that it was safe to proceed. The snow was in perfect order, crisp and smooth, and requiring a considerable stamp in the steeper parts before impression sufficient for a foot-hold could be made. As this was the first ascent of the year by the Grands Mulets, the only previous ascent having been made from the other side, the swelling slopes lay rounded off in virgin purity, and shone and glittered in the strong moonlight with all the firm fulness of nine unbroken months of incessant cold. And when the sun rose behind the Aiguille de Charmoz, converting countless peaks into Aiguilles Rouges, the exuberant domes of snow put on that satin sheen of gossamer which underlies the bark of silver birch.

The effect of the winter had been very great upon that part of the mountain which lies between the Grands Mulets and the Grand Plateau; and when the Herrs of the smaller party found that the guides must discover a fresh path among new crevasses, and give up the line they had been accustomed to take, they forgot to feel like cockneys tramping on a treadmill, and the ascent assumed the charms of experiment and novelty. Some time before arriving at the Plateau, and before one step had been cut, the Chamonix party dropped behind, and P. P. led; and as they never came to the front again, he had to cut every step of the whole ascent.

On the Grand Plateau, where for a mile or two the snow is almost level, the four held a serious discussion, the others being out of sight in the rear: at least P. P. and Couttet discussed, and the Herrs sat on the

snow, and drank cold tea and listened. There was a choice of routes; and the day was so exquisitely clear and still, that difficulties arising from wind and cloud need not be considered, and the routes could be judged on their merits alone.

The three points of attack lay in front, spread out like a fan round the upper end of the Plateau. On the left, the ascent to the Corridor: impossible, from its long steepness, to the ignorant eye, and almost equally impossible to the experienced eyes of P. P. and Couttet, from the state of the crevasses at its foot, which seemed in the distance to be more than usually unpropitious. Moreover, it was the longest of the routes by an hour and a half. To the right was the base of the Dôme du Gouté, and if only the overhanging glacier would be merciful, that was a most recommendable route'; but P. P. argued that it was very possible that when that little difficulty had been got through, and they arrived at the Bosse du Dromadaire, they might find the whole length of the final Arête mere blue ice, and that would cost immense labour and much time. Finally, between the two, lay the Ancien Passage. It looked smooth and pleasant enough, and it was a short cut to the top, which about that time was certainly a consideration. But the Ancien Passage has a history, and is a passage for something else besides men. Here Dr. Hamel's guides were lost in an avalanche in 1820; and for the last three years thermometers and lanterns and scalps and limbs have been coming out from the glacier miles and miles below, and reminding the valley of Chamonix of the terrors of the heights above. So when Couttet argued that the day was most still and fine, and the snow in a better state than he had ever seen it, and when he declared that he would guarantee that no avalanche should sweep the Ancien Passage that morning, the Herrs called to mind the shrunk leg and contorted foot they had seen two days before, lying swathed in the boughs of trees at the wooden cross in Chamonix, and they heartily ratified P. P.'s determination to have nothing to do with that route.

By this time the other party had come up, and their guides were wholly in favour of the Corridor; so while they made their halt P. P. led on towards that side of the amphitheatre. Couttet renewed his arguments for the Ancien Passage as soon as they were out of hearing of the Chamonix men, saying that he was sure they meant to try it, and so reach the top first. But he prevailed nothing, and P. P. went steadily for the crevasses guarding the foot of the snow wall which drops from the Corridor to the Plateau—went steadily, but doubtfully, for he feared that the winter's changes had made the route impracticable. The ice and snow, however, must be very obstinate through which those keen divergent Zermatt eyes can find no path, and the four had already been performing the part of flies for a quarter of an hour or so on the wall, when a noise more expressive than thunder brought them to a stand. As they clung to the frozen snow, and glanced out to the right, they saw the Ancien Passage swept by an avalanche of ice-blocks sufficient

to have shattered all Chamonix. The whole broad couloir through its utmost length appeared to be in breathless motion, and far down on to the Plateau the vast masses roared and ran, as if some evil spirit within were urging each on furiously farther than the other. P. P. gazed sternly on the rolling chaos with the left eye, and deftly flashed on Couttet the reproachful right, asking with expressive thumb where was his guarantee. H. constituted himself the spokesman of the party, and observed with characteristic nonchalance that by Jove it was as well they were not there! Some time after, when they were near the top of the snow wall, another avalanche swept down the passage, and they had the satisfaction of feeling that if they had adopted that route they must have missed the grandeur of this second sight and sound.

The Corridor was rather dreary walking, with only a slight ascent, and nothing more interesting than softish snow; but at the upper end a glorious view of southward peaks opened out, and the Mont Maudit in the immediate foreground was exceedingly grand. Here, in obedience to the sun's warnings, extra wraps were taken off before commencing the assault of the interminable height of the Mur de la Côte, up the whole of which no single step was made in advance without the assistance of P. P.'s axe. The other party had made no halt at the head of the Corridor, and were now within distant hail; and it was amusing to hear after a time the voice of their head guide coming rolling up the ice, with a request that P. P. would cut the steps a little nearer to each other, as his monsieurs found them rather wide.

Step-cutting is generally a slow process, and on clear blue ice it is not bad to accomplish an average of one a minute; but here the continuity of the ice surface was sometimes broken by frozen snow, which cut more readily, and so the second party never caught them up. The short halt after each step, while the next was being cut, made the ascent of the strangely smooth and steep Mur an easy matter for the Herrs, and allowed abundance of time for attempting to appreciate the view. But whether it had really been harder work than it seemed, or whether the diminishing amount of necessary air began to produce an effect, G. called a halt at the top of the Mur, on the edge of the level plain which leads to the final Calotte, and harangued the party in general. It was not, he said, that he was in any way losing pluck, but he was decidedly—in the body—somewhat gravelled, and he must call for constant short halts for the remainder of the ascent. Since an early breakfast the day before (and it was now eight o'clock in the morning,) he had eaten, he declared, a certain amount of bread and butter, and the thigh of a Chamonix poulet, the *gros* in the bill referring to the price rather than the size of the bird. Besides, he was taking up a lame leg to the summit, which every second step made more lame, and faintness and fatigue together produced a sort of *mal de mer*. P. P. answered that he was very glad the Herr had spoken out, instead of ruining the ascent by foolishly struggling on till he was done. H., on the other hand, did

not like it quite so well. He was fresher than when they started, and was evidently good for a rapid race to the summit, and moreover was terribly afraid lest the other party should reach the top almost as soon as they, for then the world of Chamonix, now gazing eagerly with all its telescopes from the other side of the mountain, would believe that the parties had made the ascent together. So he kept helping G. with a tug of the rope when the step was steeper than usual, timing the tug with more zeal than discretion, and cheering him on with a youthful ingenuousness which made that aged and emotionless traveller smile in spite of himself;—now crying, “See how near we are! a few minutes more!” and now appealing to other feelings, and declaring that the party below was coming on apace. For the last quarter of an hour or so this ceased, for the absolute proximity of the desired summit banished for the moment all fatigue, and they mounted promptly to the final crest. Here they found that twenty yards off there was a point of snow a foot higher than the level of the crest, and these twenty yards G.’s body and soul refused to face; but before he had time to collapse, H. put a strong pull on the rope, and hauled him along with tottering steps to the true summit, whence they heard the cannon of Chamonix sending up a triumphant welcome. There was a similar point in De Saussure’s times, and he has left it on record that he kicked it, rather with anger than with any sentiment of pleasure.

It has been written airily, in a book which treats of Alpine matters, that, on arriving at the top of a certain difficult pass, the historian of the ascent proceeded to make what observations he could; whereas the guide believes that at that interesting crisis his Herr simply threw himself on his face and howled, the only observations made being, “I wish I was down again!” “I wish I was dead!” This of course is a calumny; but when a long and elaborate account is drawn up of all that can be seen from some point which has cost the writer many hours of incessant and immense fatigue, one seems to see him in an arm-chair in his study, striking *ex-post-facto* lines of view on the map with a ruler. And so the less that is said of the view on this present occasion the better, beyond the bare fact that on three sides out of four the most perfect clearness prevailed.

From the head of the Corridor they had seen the whole mass of Monte Rosa and the Mont Cervin, and all the famous peaks which realize the early fable of the giants’ war with heaven, and now the Oberland and Dauphiné were added to the view. H. turned his undivided attention to a box of sardines, which the numerous porters of the second party had contrived to bring to the summit; and a warm discussion regarding the respective merits of butter and sardines brought poor G.’s woes to the point of despair, inasmuch as the mere sight of an innocent bread-crust had been too much for him. In vain P. P. pointed out the Dauphiné Alps, he only groaned and turned away. Ah! now, P. P. told him, he could see the Monte Rosa peaks—and again he groaned and

turned away; now, the Bernese mountains; till at last he studiously faced a thick mist which concealed the lower parts of Neuchatel and Vaud: but even there P. P. had him, and explained what he would have seen had there been no mist. There was nothing for it but to descend a little into denser air, so H. was ruthlessly torn from his sardines and carried off down the Calotte.

About twenty minutes from the top they met a friend ascending all alone. He had left Chamonix half an hour after midnight with one porter; but this porter had come to an end of his promised pluck shortly after the Grands Mulets, and returned; and so the Herr came on alone, making use of the steps cut by P. P., and accomplishing a feat never accomplished before. While they slowly continued the descent, and the solitary adventurer passed on to the summit and drank his champagne and ate his poulet, P. P. gave expression to the most unbounded astonishment. He knew this Herr's powers well, had made many courses with him and others of the best members of the Alpine Club, and had said only the day before that there was not one who could compare with him: still he was completely overcome by the adventurousness of the ascent. "Ah!" he kept repeating, "das ist ein grieslicher Herr!" and *grieslich* being a new word, he was called upon for an explanation. It seemed that Christian Almer and he had been discussing various Herrscraft, and among the chief, this present Herr, whom Almer had summed up with a deep sigh, reminiscent of many a grind more severe than his soul loved, and "das war ein grieslicher Reisender!" P. P. confessed that it was patois, not meant for *grusslich*, and believed that no German or French word would quite hit it off. It was far on the other side of *schrecklich*, and a good deal beyond *heillois*, and *heillois*, a great authority has declared, means past praying for.

The grieslicher Herr came up with them again at the top of the Mur de la Côte, and administered the remains of the champagne. Here G.'s physical faintness caused him to develop that excessive and sharp-tempered prudence which is so near akin to fright. To an inexperienced eye the appearance of the rapid, even slope of ice and frozen snow, across and down the face of which they must follow the steps cut in the morning, was so unpleasant, that no account could well exaggerate it. The ice seemed to shoot clean down to the Corridor, with a slight rocky edge at the bottom, beyond which an insignificant drop to the Corridor might be imagined. But in passing up the Corridor in the ascent, they had noticed this same drop, and instead of finding it insignificant, they had been struck with the grand loftiness of the precipice; and the recollection of that impression afforded a most suggestive measure of what must be the length of the slope, at the bottom of which the drop could now seem so small. H. had fed well, and was practised, and, moreover, had experienced the power of the rope. G., on the other hand, light-headed and heavy-footed, made every step in the belief that if he slipped he must inevi-

tably carry the other three down with him. The grieslicher Herr, meantime, danced unroped behind, doing Albert Smith's account of the horrors of the Mur.

The descent from the Corridor to the Plateau was something the same, only rather less so, to use for once a slang expression. Rather less so, inasmuch as, although steeper, it was more snow than ice, and ended in a shelving blue crevasse instead of a solid pitch over rocks; and besides, the Plateau once reached, nothing worse than fatigue remained behind.

On the Plateau the party halted for a long time, and discussed the ascent. H. had never thought it could be so easy, and so little dangerous, and could scarcely believe that he had at last been up Mont Blanc. G. allowed that the *ascent* was in all ways less than he had expected, but expressed his great surprise that so many people had achieved the *descent* in safety, and his satisfaction that he was well out of it. Here for the first time he was set right about the power of the rope, and was informed that P. P. and Couttet would have held themselves and him with the most perfect ease, however wild a tumble he might have made. This would have relieved him immensely on the Mur de la Côte, but still he repeated that there was more to face than he had expected,—not of fatigue, but of apparent danger,—on the Mur and on the descent to the Plateau. Then it was confessed by the guides that many Herrs require a hand, and two hands, at every trying place; require also that their feet be guided and held; pray constantly that they may be taken back, and in descending, are shunted down the worst slopes like logs of wood possessed;—indeed, guides are in the habit of saying that they would much rather take up a log of wood of equal weight than many a Herr who has “successfully made the ascent.” One illustrious Alpine traveller’s name was especially taken in vain.

The second party had meanwhile come down, and had already got a long start from the Plateau, so the four in the rope, with the grieslicher Herr unattached, went off at a great pace down the slopes of softened snow. As they got lower and lower on the mountain they sank lower and lower in the snow, and, for a long way, well above the knees was little more than an average depth. Their theory and practice was that they stopped for nothing; and so when one of the four stuck fast or fell, he was constrained to do the impossible, and head and arms and legs became for a while a spasmodic chaos, which turned out feet downwards and face foremost, with mechanical legs, some yards in advance of the chaos point. Farther down still, the passage of soft snow-bridges over the crevasses became more or less hazardous, and the grieslicher Herr was persuaded to lay a hand on the rope. Here, moreover, they found the other party, and taking the lead, they soon reached the Grands Mulets, and packed and started for Chamonix.

Once across the last snow, and down and across the Glacier des

Boissons, they ran at such a break-neck pace down the remaining part of the descent that they "did" the watchful authorities, and reached Chamonix before any one knew they were within an hour of the place, much to the disappointment of that excited town. The waiter at the door of the Royal was the first to see them, and he bolted like a rabbit with a ferret behind to order the cannon, but they triumphantly achieved their rooms before the salute was heard. From the Grands Mulets to the summit had been six hours and a half, to the Grands Mulets again three and a half —for the state of the snow did not allow a glissade—and to Chamonix well under three.

Next day they got certificates from the *chef-guide*. These documents stated that they had made the ascent, accompanied by so-and-so—*tous guides effectifs de la Société des Guides de Chamonix*. Considering the illegal obstructiveness of the *chef* in the matter of the porter, G. pointed out to him carefully the ludicrous falseness of this clause, thereby congealing that evaded functionary, polite, and stern, and vertical even in defeat.

On the back of the certificate a list of ascents down to 1855 is given. An early acquaintance will scarcely know himself as N. B. Richowor, and what English gentleman may be represented by Athbrun and Alpedecolat, and Honourable Jackeville, it is difficult to say. Ensleclindwom, Anglais, is said to have made the ascent on Aug. 16, 1854, and a like feat would seem to have been performed on Aug. 18, 1855, by M. K. G. Eirslacclundzous, Anglais also.

To Spring.

SEASON of youth and song and sunny mirth,
 On scented zephyrs borne with fluttering wing,
 Again thou com'st to rouse the slumbering earth,
 O'er wood and mead and hill thy charms to fling,
 Fresh songs to wake, old joys anew to bring,
 And bid thy dear delights attend thee here,
 Sweetest of Seasons! happy, soft-eyed Spring,
 First daughter of the new awakening year,
 Like Phœnix rising from cold winter's bier.

We hear thee laughing as thou passest by,
 Kissing to life young leaves of budding trees,
 In woods and meadows making melody
 With song of birds, and murmuring hum of bees,
 And rippling stream, and ever restless breeze,
 Unwearied ever, in the green glades playing
 Through aspen leaves, whose whisperings never cease.
 Thus comest thou, sweet Spring, too long delaying,
 Fresh joy and life to withered earth conveying.

Primroses star-like twinkle in the brakes,
 Violets blossom in luxuriance rare,
 The chestnut flower lets fall its snow-white-flakes,
 Green leas are pied with daisies: everywhere
 Nature rejoicing shows an aspect fair,
 Warmed by thy suns, and watered by thy showers;
 Delicious perfumes load the scented air,
 And in the woods, soft-carpeted with flowers,
 Low-bending branches form sweet fairy bowers.

Come, beauteous Spring! with knee-deep meadow-sweet
 Clothing our fields. Increase the budding more,
 Streak the long furrows with green lines of wheat,
 Bring brightest flowers from out thy choicest store,
 On thyme-set banks for bees rich honey pour,
 On orchard trees hang blossoms numberless,
 That we, when Autumn on the granary floor
 Heaps up her gifts in happy plentooaness,
 May own thy bounty in her fruitfulness.

Thomas Warton.

It is now more than a century since the occupant of many a parsonage house scattered here and there throughout England and Wales was first cheered by the appearance at his gate of one who must have been there, as elsewhere, an honoured and a welcome guest. He would be especially honoured by a brother clergyman, because he was widely known as a scholar, an antiquary, and a poet; and would, moreover, be none the less welcome because he was something of a *bon vivant*, and entirely a *bon camarade*. This was the Reverend Thomas Warton, as it becomes his chronicler and kinsman to designate him, but who was much better known as plain Tom Warton to his familiars (as many in number as they were various in fortune and degree), and who was so spoken of by all the world beside. No wonder he was popular, for he was by no means a man of one idea. As college tutor he could keep even the idler students from yawning in his class-room while he held forth on the beauties of Theocritus and Homer; and he could delight his audience by the eloquence of the disquisitions which, as professor of poetry, it was his province to deliver in the schools. Then he could discourse with learning on black-letter volumes and Gothic architecture; and if on the latter topic his knowledge has been surpassed in later days, he was a man much before his own time in the love he bore to the subject, and in the zeal with which he tried to propagate a taste for its cultivation. But Warton, as we have hinted, though an antiquary and a scholar, was by no means a Dryasdust or a recluse. He passed his mornings in study or in teaching; but when he ¹⁰⁹⁰ from table at the college-hall of Trinity, and adjourned to the common-room, he was the life and soul of the assembled fellows. Not that he was a roisterer, like the jovial clerk of Copmanhurst, though he certainly did not, in precept or practice, conform to the rules of the ascetics. To be sure, he once wrote an inscription on some hermitage which had taken his fancy, in praise of solitude, a herb diet, and "the beechen cup unstain'd with wine," &c. His father (who had also been in his day professor of poetry at Oxford) had committed himself in precisely the same manner. Neither of them of course was in earnest; and their verses accordingly relished of little else than the meagre entertainment they had made believe to eulogize. On the other hand, the "Panegyric on Oxford Ale," by the junior poet, is a very cheery performance. He drew his inspiration from the fountain he dearly loved, and his sentiments have therefore about them a lively smack of reality, a pleasant, sensuous flavour of truth. A visitor like this could indeed well reckon on the certainty of a welcome, when, at the entrance of the village, he stopped his chaise, or checked the

roadster which in those primitive days carried himself and his saddle-bags, and, in answer to inquiries, was "guided to the parson's wicket." There the reception would be as cordial, though not, perhaps, as ostentatious and costly, as would greet a college fellow of some little importance in these our giddy-paced times. The entertainer and his guest had, doubtless, then, as now, a good understanding on the subject of conventional usages and manners. The household and belongings of the country clergyman of that day answered pretty much the description given of them fifty years previously by Pope in his happy imitation of Swift,—

A wife that makes conserves, a steed
That carries double when there's need;
October store, and best Virginia, &c.

Then, as to the visitor, the college fellow of the period was completely typified in Warton. He was indeed the very ideal of a member of the brotherhood among whom was to be found, to use the words he applies elsewhere,* a nice

discerning
Both of good liquor and good learning;

though of course, like the endowments of fellowships and livings, such gifts were not always proportioned alike. Of the last-named sort of "discerning" Tom Warton had an abundant share; nor was he ill-provided in respect of the other; though it does not indeed appear that he was at all given to the habit of rendering himself ebrius, or even ebriolus, as the learned Baron of Bradwardine latinizes our vernacular "drunken" or "fuddled."

He could fairly say with the baron, "No, sir : I distinguish, I discriminate ; and approve of wine so far only as it maketh glad the face, or in the language of Flaccus, '*recepto amico.*'" The company and conversation of a man like this were no doubt in most instances duly prized, especially by a quondam fellow-collegian, who, if he could not fully appreciate all the bookish lore with which Warton was replete, must have been glad enough, in return for university news and good-fellowship over pipe and glass, to do the honours of his parish church, and facilitate the access of his friend to any ruins or remains of antiquity in the neighbourhood. On such occasions Warton was in all his glory ; and, whether alone or in company, he was equally busy and delighted. Note-book in hand, he would mark, and measure, and speculate, and admire ; or, if an audience should improvise itself around him, then would he, like Captain Clutterbuck, "expatiate to their astonished minds upon crypta, and chancels, and naves, Gothic and Saxon architectures, mullions, and flying buttresses." In this way he passed the summer vacations during many years of his life ; storing up facts, searching out records, consulting authorities, and noting references, all with the ultimate view of producing a complete and systematic work on the subject of Gothic architecture, the study of which he pursued up to the time of his death with a love

which admitted of no engrossing rivalry, except in that which he bore to his brother and sister, his writing-desk, his old books, and his old college ale.

With such endearments and resources he led as happy a bachelor life as ever fell to the lot of man. Nearly up to the time of his death he enjoyed vigorous health; and though, in a letter written in his fiftieth year, he talks of being threatened with the gout, it must have promised to deal gently with him, for he begs its permission to let him "have a few gallops with the Duke of Beaufort's dogs" on his return to Oxford. We must, however, qualify a little, and allow that his love of the Muses (for that of the rest of the sex does not seem to have troubled him) became towards the latter part of his life the source of some disturbance to his repose. Just as a mother pets the least robust of her progeny, so does the poet oftentimes love the most faulty of his stanzas; and Warton, in spite of his good-nature, was galled when it reached his ears that Johnson, who really held both his talents and his friendship in the highest regard, was in the habit of quizzing some of the poetical performances which their author prized the most. This seems to be the only way of accounting for a coldness which certainly sprang up between them, and which vexed Johnson so acutely that he is said, on very excellent authority, to have shed tears on one occasion when allusion was made to the circumstance. He was, moreover, provoked to declare that Tom Warton was the only man of genius he knew who wanted a heart. "This," says a considerate critic,* "is, we think, a proof that his charge of heartlessness against Warton was exaggerated; for how can you weep for the loss of a man's friendship, who has wanted the great element of which friendship is composed?"

It must be remembered that Warton had been labouring in the composition of verse ever since he was nine years of age; some of it, too, after models for which the Doctor had a scant measure of respect—the minor poems of Milton—the older English poetry, and that which may be called Warton's own, for he was the first, says his biographer,† who applied to modern poetry the embellishment of Gothic manners and Gothic arts, the tournaments and festivals, the poetry, music, painting, and architecture of elder days. How, then, could a bard, unless his heart was made entirely of honey and butter, do otherwise than resent the disparaging criticism which eventually found its way into circulation embodied in such flouting lines as these?—

Wheresoe'er I turn my view
All is strange, yet nothing new;
Endless labour all along,
Endless labour to be wrong;

* *Life of T. Warton*, by the Rev. G. Gilfillan. Edinburgh, 1854.

† *The Poetical Works of the late Thomas Warton, B.D., together with Memoirs of his Life and Writings*. By Richard Mant, M.A. 1802.

Phrase that time hath flung away,
Uncouth words in disarray,
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
Ode, and elegy, and sonnet.

It was Warton's habit, as we have said, to make notes on all subjects of antiquarian interest of which he met with illustrations in the course of his summer excursions. These notes he kept on enlarging as opportunities occurred, until they filled eight copy-books, pretty closely written in his own very crabbed hand. They were then faithfully and more clearly transcribed by his sister, Miss Jane Warton, a lively warm-hearted body, who looked on her brothers—the laureate, and Dr. Joseph Warton, the master of Winchester College—with great affection, and on their poetry with unbounded reverence and admiration. She, too, like them, had been early inoculated with the hereditary love of rhyming, a propensity which continued to abide with her till she was past the eighty-sixth year of her age. The collection of memoranda referred to is entitled *Observations, Critical and Historical, on Churches, Monasteries, Castles, and other Monuments of Antiquity in various Counties of England and Wales*. These manuscripts, both original and transcribed, have lately come, by the decease of a near relative of Warton and himself, into the possession of the writer of this notice. The observations contained in them range over a period of fourteen years, from 1759 to 1773, the subject-matter relating to divers localities in the Southern and Midland counties of England, and the Southern parts of Wales. They are interesting, inasmuch as they not only show Warton's views, as far as he had ventured to mature them, on the subject of the different orders and periods of Gothic architecture, but exhibit the then condition of many of the buildings, military, ecclesiastical, and civil, which had thus far survived the fury of battle and of breeze, the corrosion of time, and the scandalous neglect or still more pernicious meddling of several preceding generations. Based on the information which he had thus industriously collected, it was Warton's intention to have constructed a regular history of Gothic architecture in England. This he had intimated more than once in his prefaces to various publications; but though it would appear that he had really got so far as to complete a work on the subject which was ready for the press at the time of his death, it has never seen the light, nor has its non-appearance among the papers which he left behind him been ever satisfactorily accounted for. His biographer, Bishop Mant, says, with natural partiality, that "the loss of a finished work by such a man, and on such a subject, can hardly be enough regretted, for it can hardly ever be repaired." It is, however, somewhat to be doubted whether Warton's reputation would have been much enhanced by the preservation of this additional proof of his zeal for promoting the study of the beautiful but difficult branch of art he loved. The study of the Gothic had been long ignored. Owing to this there was a sad dearth of professional assistance to guide the amateur student in correcting the crude impressions which

a want of sound technical knowledge is apt to generate. We should have had bold speculation, ingenious theory, and unbounded enthusiasm; but it is probable that neither Warton, nor Gray, whose coëval studies were of a kindred order, would be considered authorities in our days, though they might have shone brightly among the lesser lights of their own. Nevertheless it is not easy to overrate the benefit which the taste and talents of these contemporary writers have conferred on posterity. Of course we are only coupling their names together while reflecting on the mischief they must have been the means of averting from many a country church, and beg to disclaim any intention of comparing their stature when any reference is made to a "Country Churchyard!" To be sure, till long after their time, and long into ours, the genius of churchwardenism ruled in the vestries, and presided over the destruction or defacement of much that would now be rescued from their hands. Still Gray must have done a great deal, and Warton, we have authority for asserting, did a very great deal towards arresting the progress of Vandallism, which had been so long let loose, like the "untied winds," to "fight against the churches." The venerable lady through whom his manuscript Itinerary has been transmitted to us could well remember having witnessed, in her early days, her uncle's self-congratulations on the subject of his efforts in that direction. He would relate with glee how often he had stopped some pursy vicar riding with his wife stuck behind him on a pillion into Oxford, or Winchester, or about any neighbourhood in which he had sojourned, and how he had scolded, and argued, and almost shed tears, rather than fail to enlist their sympathies in favour of some tomb or niche, which he had heard of as being doomed to destruction. Then again if Warton lingered, as was his wont, more than was seemly over ale and tobacco in out-of-the-way roadside inns, it was often for the purpose of converting from the error of his ways some stupid farmer, who had designs on the recumbent effigy of doughty knight, or stately dame, and was about to have it mutilated and maimed for the purpose of making more pew-room for the hoops and petticoats of his buxom daughters. In his diary there is frequent recurrence to the painful subject of dilapidation and decay. In the neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmunds he speaks of travelling over roads kept in repair with materials drawn from the remains of the Abbey founded by Canute. At Thetford, whoever wanted a cart-load of flints scrupled not to help himself from the cloisters reared by Roger Bigod. At Glastonbury there was scarce a cottage but exhibited the mullions of a Gothic window, or fragments of pillars, cognizances, coats-of-arms, and so forth. The apathy with which these acts of desecration were regarded by high and low alike grievously vexed his soul, and constantly elicited from him some act of intercession and remonstrance, which was, as we have said, often attended with most happy effect. It is then incumbent on us who are flourishing in comparative, though not yet entire, archaeological security, to look back with grateful remembrance on what Warton passed his life in doing

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for us in the days of our grandfathers. With his pen he laboured to turn into a right channel the thoughts of those whose notions about objects of antiquarian interest were crude and undefined, or who considered the study of them to be, at best, repulsive and dry. These he taught to think as he thought himself, and as he gracefully expressed himself in verse—

Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strewn with flowers.

But he did more than this: he rescued in numberless instances the objects themselves from the rude hands of ignorance and mischief, and by his personal intervention caused them to be preserved till the time should come when the many, as well as the few, should understand and appreciate them. While, however, Warton was gradually collecting materials for a work, which, as the event proved, was never destined to reach completion, he was actively employed in literary undertakings of many sorts, which bore fruit, sooner or later, each after its kind. During the greater part of this period he continued to enjoy the uninterrupted friendship of Johnson, in whose behalf he had busied himself among the university authorities to procure the degree of M.A., which Johnson wished to see attached to his name on the title-page of his forthcoming Dictionary. While this matter was still pending, Johnson had passed five weeks at Oxford in the constant society of Warton, who furnished the particulars of sundry walks, talks, and "Why, no, sirs," which appear in Boswell's book. In one of their strolls they visited the ruins of Oseney Abbey, the desolation of which suggests a passage of pathetic lament in Warton's MS. Itinerary, and gave occasion to the Rambler for the venting of his wrath on reformers of all sorts. Johnson encouraged his friend in most of his literary enterprises; asked for, and accepted papers for the *Idler* and *Adventurer*, and notes for his edition of Shakespeare; and, referring to Warton's "Observations on Spenser," said, "You have shown to all who shall hereafter attempt the study of our ancient authors, the way to success by directing them to the perusal of the books which those authors have read," &c. Warton carried his critical knowledge of Old English writers into the Chatterton controversy, and assisted in demolishing the claims of the Rowley poems to be considered genuine. He edited, with notes, the minor poems of Milton, and illustrated with historical learning the annals of his little parish of Kiddington. He tried his hand likewise at biography, and did as much as the sterile nature of the subject would permit for the characters of Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of his college, and Ralph Bathurst, one of its principal benefactors. The classics too came in for no small share of his attention, as was made manifest in his annotated edition of Theocritus, his selections of Greek and Latin inscriptions, and other pieces, evincing a great deal of good scholarship, and an expenditure of labour rarely indulged in by those who are not driven to exertion by the stimulus of need. With regard to the great bulk of Warton's poetical

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writings we may say of him, as of any other author, in the words of Shakespeare, somewhat rudely transposed and adapted,

The good things that men write live after them,
The trash lies fast interred with their bones.

Yet it is sometimes an agreeable relaxation to look over samples of literature which must be classed in the latter category, but which nevertheless brought in their day respect and consideration to the authors who produced, and gave, we must suppose, pleasure to the generation that perused and applauded them. If the reader's mind should haply be in the right vein, he may find much amusement even in a batch of odes written by a poet laureate to celebrate the yearly returning occasion of a royal birthday. It is really a curious experiment to subject one of these inflated productions to the slightest critical pressure, and mark how the process results in reducing it to a complete state of exhaustion and collapse. Tested in this way Warton's annual effusions fare ill indeed. They show that George III. was as ill-used a monarch as most of his predecessors. Here is an example. In the summer of 1790 the Court had given out that it was meditating a trip to some watering-place. Accordingly the Muse is summoned, and, being put to the question, has to declare

Within what fountain's craggy cell
Delights the Goddess Health to dwell ?

Is it at Matlock ?

• Where from the rigid roof distils
Her richest stream in steely rills ?—

Or at the Bristol Hot-wells ? Or is it at Bath that she

broods with watchful wing
O'er ancient Bladud's mystic spring ?

or at Malvern ? or at Buxton ? No; at none of these. Weymouth is her chosen abode ; and to Weymouth their Majesties decide to go, the goddess pointing out the way ; for

Lo, amid the watery roar
In Thetis' car she skims the shore :
Where Portland's brows, embattled high
With rocks, in rugged majesty,
Frown o'er the billows, and the storm restrain,
She beckons Britain's sceptred pair
The treasures of the deep to share, &c.

But the privilege of beryming the throne was not then confined to the official pen. Till late in the last century, on most great public occasions, verses, in the way of condolence, congratulation, &c., were made by the universities, and dutifully forwarded to St. James's. Of course, on the occasion of the King's marriage in 1761, Oxford had come out in great force, Warton, then Professor of Poetry, leading the way. Having

referred to the "Chaplet" which the tuneful dons were weaving among the domes where, as he says, "Science sits enshrined in roofs sublime," the laureate goes on to invite the Queen to Oxford in the following strains:—

Thither, if haply some distinguished flower,
Of these mixed blooms from that ambrosial bower
Might catch thy glance, and rich in nature's hue,
Entwine thy diadem with honour due—
If seemly gifts the train of Phœbus pay,
To deck imperial Hymen's festive day,
Thither thyself shall haste, and mildly deign
To tread with nymph-like step the conscious plain,
Pleased in the Muses' nook with decent pride
To throw the sceptred pall of state aside;
Nor from the shade shall George be long away,
That claims Charlotta's love, and courts her stay, &c.

One would suppose that royal people must have thought the university big-wigs were making game of them. Well might Peter Pindar exclaim, as he did on an after occasion,—

But tell me, Thomas Warton, without joking,
Art thou, or art thou *not*, thy sov'reign smoking?

But no. His was the established style of bards in those days. It is, however, unjust to an author to dwell on the worst only of his productions. Warton was capable of better things than the spreading of "court-plasters; the stringing together of laudatory couplets, to be chanted and recitatively, as was the etiquette on a birthday, for the edification of pages, maids of honour, and gentlemen pensioners." * The most laboured of his compositions betray, no doubt, more of reading than of originality; yet there is a certain merit about his best which could gain favour with Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and other critics of mark. Of these pieces his ode entitled "The Suicide" is the best. "The Grave of King Arthur" and "The Crusade" have a sort of stirring resonance about them, which awakens feelings and longings that impel the reader at once to a reperusal of "The Talisman" and "Ivanhoe." In truth, the ear of Scott was early set a-tingling by these very effusions of the Gothic muse, detached fragments of which have the honour of appearing as the headings of some of the chapters in his novels. Many of Warton's humorous pieces are extremely amusing—"The Castle Barber's Soliloquy," "The Prologue on the Old Winchester Playhouse, over the Butchers' Shambles," "The Progress of Discontent." Warton's fame, however, rests most solidly on his "History of English Poetry," a work exhibiting not only very great labour and research, but much elegant scholarship, and a mind which, if incapable of producing a great poem, was in itself essentially poetical. "No man," says a Quarterly Reviewer, "could in Warton's time have produced such poems as he did, unless his studies

* Duke of Buccleugh's Letter on the Laureateship in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.

had qualified him to become the historian of English poetry; nor could any one have composed that history unless he had been born a poet." *

Such are the claims which Tom Warton is entitled to hold on our affectionate remembrance and regard. The rector, while he animates his parishioners into zeal for getting rid of the whitewash that for three centuries has accumulated on the walls and pillars of their church, may often think of him with gratitude when he finds in good preservation a brass or marble effigy, which, but for Warton's earnest entreaties, would long ago have found its way to the shop of the marine-store dealer, or the mason's yard.

Warton has been recorded by those who knew him to have been good-looking in his youth, but latterly to have become a thick, squat little man, with a beaming face, and a hurried voluble manner of speaking, which Dr. Johnson likened to the gobble of a turkey-cock. His bob-wig, which is comely enough in Reynolds's portrait of him, now suspended in the Hall of Trinity, was not always so neatly adjusted; and he was altogether so careless about the appearance of his outward man, that on one occasion he was on the point of being excluded from the king's presence by the attendant beef-eaters, when his Majesty recognized his faithful Laureate by a certain hasty spasmodic trick of mumbling, together with two or three apt quotations from Virgil. Like Johnson, the historian of English poetry had more than a sneaking belief in ghosts. As, however, these airy nothings did not suffice to gratify the longings of one who was a professed and inveterate lover of "sights," he never failed to patronize every wild Indian, learned pig, mermaid, or sea-serpent which the enterprise and ingenuity of the showman brought within his reach. In this he resembled his predecessor in the Camden professorship of history—our grand expounder of international law—Lord Stowell. To be sure, we do not hear of that great judge having allowed himself to be so far beguiled by a restless curiosity as Warton, who carried his love of drumming, trumpeting, and running after all exhibitions, both martial and civil, to a passionate excess; never failing in attendance on any popular gathering, whether convoked by a field-preaching, a review, a street conjuror, or even an execution. Indeed, it is averrel that on one occasion he was known to have stood among the crowd at the foot of the scaffold, disguised in the smock-frock of a carter, for the purpose of avoiding recognition. It must have been the prevalence of these tastes which created the current impression of Warton having been, with all his acquirements, a lazy, desultory man. In Greene's Diary we read, "The prodigious extent and depth of Warton's researches astonish me the more, as I have been told by a brother collegian who knew him well, that he was a lounger and idler in the morning, willing to execute any undergraduate's thesis to entice him to fishing and badger-hunting." This, however, was not the case. He reconciled the enjoyment of a

certain portion of leisure with a great deal of employment by the habit of rising moderately early in the morning. He was thus enabled to sustain the character of a smoker, punster, and what is now called a "muscular Christian," while engaged on a work, to gather the materials for which was the labour of an average lifetime: a work which, with all its shortcomings, must still be held as one of great literary value. As Byron declares of himself in *Beppo*, it may certainly be predicated of Warton that he

Had no objection to a pot of beer,

and would not seldom prefer quietly "bemusing" himself therein over a pipe, to joining in the drinking-bouts which were too much the fashion at college and elsewhere. But if in the Allegro aspect of life Warton admired the robuster charms somewhat more than would be pleasing to modern refinement, he had a sincere and unaffected love of the Penseroso likewise. Hour after hour he would pass ecstatically fondling the quaint old volumes in the Bodleian; and the aisles and cloisters of an old abbey church were to him as an earthly paradise. Neither would a coursing-match, nay, not even the boisterous attractions of a rat-hunt, allure him from his place in the college chapel or cathedral, when the bell announced that choral service was about to begin. In this he joined heart and soul, never failing to renew daily those feelings which he had begun to realize and to write about while still a mere schoolboy; and which he cherished through all the phases of a bustling, a studious, a contemplative career.

Many odd stories about Warton are current in his family yet—how fond he was of giving clandestine help to the Winchester boys in their tasks, and joining in their noisy fun; how he once had to fly from the approach of Dr. Warton, whose nose had guided him to the scene of some contraband cookery in which his brother was assisting the youngsters; and how the astonished doctor dragged him from his hiding-place into light. Then there is another anecdote which Mant relates. The doctor had received an exercise from a lad which he thought much too good for him; and suspecting the truth, ordered him into his study after school, and sent for the Poet Laureate. When the exercise had been read: "Don't you think," said the doctor, "that it is well worth half-a-crown?" Warton assented. "Then," said the doctor, "you shall give the boy one."

Such were the tales that added cheerfulness to the crackle of the nightly faggot which blazed in the dormitories of old Winchester College, when Howley was a studious youth and a great favourite with his master; and when the frolics of Sydney Smith provoked the future archbishop to take a flying shot at his head with a chessboard. One by one the contemporary chroniclers of these legends have been passing away; their children and grandchildren have succeeded them, and it is doubtful whether there remains extant, at the time we are penning these lines, one single individual who remembers the Wartons.

Balgh Grueby's Ghost.

To Mr. ANDREW WYBROW, *Theberton Crossways, Fenshire.*

Elm-tree Court, Temple, 15th August, 1764.

DEAR SIR.—I am to inform you, that by the will of Miss Sybilla Grueby, late of Grueby Grange, Fenshire, deceased, you are constituted sole legatee of the demesnes of Grueby, with the lands, mansion-house, buildings, and all other hereditaments thereto belonging. The said will lies in our office ready for proving whenever it may suit your convenience to come to town. And we would respectfully suggest that an early day be named for that purpose, there being some particulars connected with the said demise of which we have it in charge to make you acquainted. Having been honoured with the confidence of the late owners of Grueby through several generations, we trust to be permitted to continue our services to yourself in the same capacity, and are, dear sir, yours faithfully,

JOSEN and JOSENS,

By PHIL. POUNCET.

"What be a legatee, wife?" asked old Andrew Wybrow, as his dame, having spelled through the foregoing letter, took off her spectacles and rubbed them with a puzzled air.

"I ben't quite clear, master; but I've an idee it has somthin' to do wi' property."

"Little good ever come to *uz* in that shape, dame; and I don't like the sound on it now; we may get into troubles likes. Best take th' letter to lawyer Jonas; he'll tell *uz* all about it."

Lawyer Jonas had no difficulty in telling them all about it, so far as the obvious meaning of the communication went; but a considerable deal in reassuring old Andrew that there was nothing on the face of it to be alarmed at. But the lawyer's perplexity to make out the mystery beneath, probably exceeded his client's, in the same degree that his capacity to appreciate the importance of the intelligence conveyed did. Andrew was not able to afford him much help towards an elucidation. Even the name of the testator was strange to him, and in the mill-horse round of an uneventful life, he could recall no incident which the lawyer's ingenuity was able to twist into a passable bearing. The nearest approach to a relevant fact, which a pretty close examination brought out, did not amount to much; fell very far short, indeed, of solving the mystery. It was simply this: Andrew remembered once—a long many years ago it was, he knew—that he was bothered a good deal by two or three strange ladies, who one day called him from his work to ask questions about where he was christened, and where his father was buried, and most about the old tombstones in Theberton churchyard; but he soon turned 'em over to the sexton. "They war the very curiouset old ladies *I* ever see, and that's sayin' a good deal!" concluded old Andrew.

Mr. Jonas, making allowance for the reputed curiosity of the sex, even that particular portion of it designated by Mr. Wybrow, still thought there remained something over to be carried to a special account in such very particular inquiries about a man who must, even at that period, have left his *beaux jours* so far behind as old Andrew. Yet, straining and stretching, with all a lawyer's capacity at legal tension, this scrap of evidence, it went but a very short way towards fathoming the mystery. He was obliged reluctantly to admit that still lay beyond the reach of the legal plummet.

On the apprehensive devisee presenting himself, as invited, at the offices of Messrs. Josen and Josesns, attended by Mr. Jonas, whose company he insisted on having, those gentlemen fulfilled their promise in communicating the particulars referred to in their letter. To say that they succeeded in making either Andrew or his legal *ad latum* comprehend them, would perhaps be saying too much. Luckily they did not hold that to be strictly a part of their duty. The particulars so communicated were some of them of a nature singular enough to excuse even the astute intellect of Mr. Jonas for finding a difficulty in grasping them. Such form the basis of the following relation; the business-like brevity into which the Temple lawyers compressed it being amplified in some points, and supplemented by some others that were never in their possession.

A century ago there stood in what was then one of the least accessible districts of Fenshire, a long low red-brick structure of the baldest kind of English domestic architecture which preceded that known as Elizabethan. Devoid of parapet, or gables, or embayed windows, or mullioned doorways to give variety and dignity to the façade, its two long rows of narrow casements blinked upon the bleak north with a hard, uncompromising air, in which pride struggled with asceticism. Why it had not faced about to the south, where a cheerful landscape awaited its regards, was a marvel to every chance traveller through the out-of-the-way neighbourhood in which it stood. It appeared altogether such a piece of wrong-headedness, and its morose face wore such an air of consciousness of having made a grand mistake in life, as to suggest the idea that it had turned its back on the sun in some perverse fit during its growing stage, and done penance in a winterly and misanthropic existence ever since. As if expressly to countenance this notion, the area upon which it looked, instead of being a compound of verdant turf and variegated parterre, such as constituted the plaisirance of the old country mansion of the period, was a broad flag-stoned court, stretching down to a sunk ha-ha, surmounted by sturdy posts and swagging chains, which formed its boundary from the highway. A grim conventional-looking courtyard, with no other relief to the monotony of its aspect than a characteristic sun-dial, stone-mounted, which itself had been so perversely placed as to be precluded from catching a smile from its god during six months out of the twelve; an outrage for which it avenged itself in the cynically abandoned motto—REGARDLESS OF THE HOURS.

In the rear of the building lay a capacious vegetable garden, by much

the most cheerful feature it had to offer, and that apparently not an original appendage, but subsequently carved out of a weedy plantation which surrounded it on three sides. This, with the exception of an outer belt of sombre firs, was monopolized by brambles, nettles, and similar rude growths of nature, thrusting up their heads high above the few shrubs left of its original stock, as though to assert a prior claim to what air and sunshine might penetrate the grim cordon that surrounded them. A perfect paradise for small birds, snakes, hedgehogs, and much burrowing vermin, but in the human estimate, regarded with a view either to ornament or utility, a wilderness.

Such were a few of the more obvious among the external features of Grueby Grange. A modern auctioneer even might have experienced a difficulty to make them attractive upon paper. That it should never have entered into the minds of any in the long line of possessors of the Grange to pull it down and substitute a structure more consonant with the received ideas of the beautiful, even if it were only to take the perverse twist out of the old house, is scarcely conceivable. But it was obscurely hinted that some obstacle existed to such a procedure. It might have been nothing more than the menace darkly conveyed in a rude rhyme carved on the oaken lintel over the great door, which tradition stated had been placed there by the founder of the Grange for a warning to his posterity. The figure of a huge rose appeared cut upon the beam; a device which might have been thought to bear some reference to the cognizance of the founder's royal chief, who united in himself the rival roses of English faction, but for some apparent allusion to it in the verse beneath, which was difficult to reconcile with such a supposition. If the flower was designed to be taken in its ancient symbolism, then the sibylline obscurity of the rhyme was only made the more impenetrable by it. Thus ran the legend :—

~~G~~hiles . ther . bee . Grubys . ynn . y^r . londe .

Letter . Grubys . rose . ystondre .

Gif . ytt . bee . plucked . bpe . Grubys . honde .

Ytt . honde . shal . pluck . upp . hous . ande . londe ,

Possibly this was sufficiently sinister and obscure to influence the generations proximate to its contriver, if the later ones may be supposed to have held it in no great reverence; and among the latter there may have happened to be no Florio in the line to whom the demon whispered, "Have a taste."

Interiorly, the Grange did not belie its outward promise. The exigencies of successive generations had necessarily produced some modifications of the original plan, but in the main it was unchanged. The apartments were for the most part long narrow chambers of low pitch, ill-lighted by the casements of boreal aspect when the day was at its prime, but especially gloomy in the candlelight, harbouring shadows at their remote ends, like the black noiseless wings of night-birds perpetually

hovering. If the muser who sat down beneath them with his thoughts for sole companions, chanced to have any cares in his horizon, however remote, he was liable to be impressed ominously by these brooding wings, as the misgiving traveller is by vultures in the distant sky when he feels by anticipation their beaks in his heart.

The furniture at the period this narrative has reference to, was of the stately but comfortless character proper to a generation which never relaxed a muscle except in sleep, and then hearsed itself in draperies to screen from waking eyes the shocking liberties that audacious leveller took with dignity and deportment. Chairs with stark upright backs, adapted only to self-supporting spines, and tables that took ample precautions against any approach to familiarity or ease, by an under-framing which kept the sitter at arms' length, were fair exponents of the prevailing character of the moveables, or immoveables as they might rather be called. Even the more volatile members of the household—the hangings and coverings of needlework—bore evidence that not the elegant tastes of the sex could withstand the *genius loci*; for the subjects chosen for illustration by the graceful needle were of the grimdest supplied by the range of sacred and profane history: “Jephtha's Vow,” and the “Stabbing of Ethelred while draining the grace-cup,” and such-like cheerful episodes in the great epic of humanity. Dark cabinets were there in plenty, as there always is wherever the vicissitudes of a long succession of generations concentrate, seeming to hint at mysteries nothing should ever induce them to divulge; and mirrors which made pretence of spreading a cloudy curtain in their depths, which needed only to be drawn aside to reveal futurity. Ancient mirrors everywhere grow to have a wizard aspect—probably from the strange secrets that are bared to them; but these added the austerity of seclusion to the experience of length of days. For during the century, or century and a half, or two centuries—a few decades do not count for much in such a span—that they had been immured in the Grange, no sunbeam had ever glinted on their faces; and they declared the fact as plainly as a human face might that had lived to be a hundred, *and never seen a smile!*

The Grange was not free from the tendency commonly charged upon structures of its order and age—for branching out into long passages leading nowhere; but in it, the impulse had expended itself in the production of one long gallery, running from end to end of the upper of its two floors: not a mere passage such as a modern architect might have thrown in to satisfy chambermaid exigencies, but a liberal thoroughfare, along which a handsome equipage might have been driven—and turned again, if the team were well in hand. Confessedly, this capaciousness was not without a few drawbacks. The place was generally gusty with draughts from the numerous doors opening on to it, which were apt to puff out bed-going candles and startle their bearers with sounds like long-drawn sighs: altogether a cold-catching, rheumatism-giving promenade, and, speaking salubriously, good for nothing but ghosts to stalk

in. Nor was it to be expected that such uncommonly eligible quarters for that fraternity should be left to the sole occupancy of material tenants. Already, in the first half of the last century, what with the demolitions of improvement, and the absorptions of spare rooms by the increase of population, that dignified seclusion that delighteth the ghostly taste was growing almost as difficult to find as reasonably rented *appartements* in the capital of his Imperial Majesty of France, in the second half of the present one. A commodious domicile like Grueby Grange was not, therefore, likely to remain unappropriated by that class to whom "rent is no consideration."

But there was room under its roof for a co-tenancy of *spirituals* and *corporeals* without either getting much in the other's way; more especially as it chanced that the habits of the respective parties were not likely to clash. The family was a quiet one, and kept early hours, and it may be assumed that the ghosts, according to their prevailing habits, were likely to be quiet too, and to keep early hours also, after their way: only their meridian falling at midnight, 10 P.M. mortal reckoning might be considered the very earliest hour at which the world was sufficiently aired for ghosts of condition to walk abroad. Occasionally an early riser among them would cross a belated domestic on her way to bed; but on such rare occurrences the ghost seemed fully as much scared as the mortal; for by the time the latter had put a climax to her terror by dropping her candle, and screamed, and brought the whole household to their respective doors in very strange head-gear, and very scant nether garments, the object of the alarm was nowhere—or at least not *there*. So, on the whole, the parties agreed fully as well as in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred of joint occupancy, where they are tied down and held to good behaviour by covenant and agreement.

The family at the Grange, which assumed to be "of that ilk," dated from an ancestor who bore bow and bill in the ranks of Henry of Richmond, on Bosworth field, and was—so the traditions in the family went—for notable service there, rewarded on the spot by a gift of the estate of Grueby, whose owner had also fought and fallen on that field, but on the wrong, that is the vanquished, side. A portrait of the Bosworth billman hung at the stair-head—the picture of a dour man in middle life, awesome to look upon, from a certain wicked cunning the painter had contrived to throw into the eyes, intensified by an arrangement familiar to us in masters of the Venetian school, of bringing the face into a strong light, while the outlines of the person are swallowed up in gloom. The portrait of Ralph Grueby was a notable specimen of this trick of art—a face looking out of a black cloud. The effect was enough to startle any one coming upon it unawares, and even the domestics at the Grange, to whom custom had familiarized it, never cared to linger within the range of its wicked eyes.

The representatives of this grim stock had dwindled down to three sisters, of whom the elder two had arrived at the stage where the seal is

set upon the lot of single blessedness, and neither might any longer be expected to give an heir to the Grange. Their opportunities had lapsed while the grey old sun-dial out in the forecourt had been holding true to its abandoned motto, for they, like it, had been "regardless of the hours" till the sun had declined and left them in unbroken shade. Wooers in plenty had found their way to the Grange in the period when such gauds were seasonable—for when had the heiress of broad acres to sit and sigh forth the ancient maiden's lament, "Heigho! for a husband!"?—but somehow the wooings had not sped. Without any heart-breakings, or even violent strainings of the tender chord, early ardours insensibly cooled down to a platonic temperature, and left behind only pensive memories for the lavendered cabinets of the Grueby ladies; whence they were duly taken out and aired in fitting moods and seasons, with an interest which had nothing more mournful about it than appertains to everything of the past.

In effect these two elderly ladies had declined into that half-dreamy existence, which imperceptibly comes over such as have few external relations with the present, but many memories in the past. This state naturally disposed them to entertain some of those minor superstitions, which in their day were held not unbecoming maiden gentlewomen, who, to use an euphemism, could no longer be called "young." They detected coffins in the fire, and winding-sheets in the candle, and strangers in the tea-cup, and nursed their little prejudices against unlucky days. The spilling of salt was a thing to avoid, and the crossing of knife-blades, and a host of such harmless fancies. And probably no inducement within the compass of mortals to offer, would have prevailed on them to sit down thirteen at table. But as touching the stories of ghosts at the Grange, they set their faces against them, out of a regard for the reputation of their progenitors. They considered that it could be none but "troubled" spirits who were affected with peripatetic propensities, and therefore it would be a sort of reflection on their own blood to admit the possibility of any of their ancestors being so afflicted. The eldest Miss Grueby, especially, met any hint of the kind ventured on by the domestics with a severe rebuke; which was followed up by assembling the entire household, immediately before going to bed, in the oak parlour, and there, under the hovering wings of the night-birds, reading aloud a certain chapter which recounts the unhallowed doings of a woman of En-dor; appending as an unauthorized gloss upon the text the observation that they who saw spirits must be as wicked as they who raised them. It is not surprising that discipline such as this should nip many a promising ghost-story in the bud, and if it did not prevent the ghosts from walking, at least dispose those who chanced to encounter them to keep their own counsel.

Besides, the stories were chiefly legendary—bequests from generations blessed with a sharper vision and a robuster faith than the present. The one that took the most definite shape related to the original of the por-

trait on the stair, Grim Ralph, as was his traditional appellation. Darkly the legend ran, that the spirit of Ralph was burdened with a secret which must be made known to the last of his race, under penalty of eternal tирrest for himself; and not to let the all-important opportunity slip by, he made a visit of observation once at least in each generation,—appeared to some one or more members of the family in the oak parlour,—apparently satisfied himself that the hour had not struck, and vanished without making any sign. What degree of credence the members of the family in the present generation gave to this legend was not known: it might be that the Grueby ladies carried misdoubtings under that mask from which some of us borrow a braver face for the world than our closet mirror has to show us; but it was certain that spiritual visitants could count upon no open welcome from the principals of the Grange, had it entered any of their noddles to favour them with a call.

But besides these two ancient maidens there was a third sister, the child of another mother, and nearly a score of years the junior of the elder ladies; between whom and her the contrast was not less in person than in years, the difference mainly consisting in her greater resemblance to their common ancestor, Ralph. The features depicted on the canvas were strikingly reproduced in Sybilla Grueby; the same type, though moulded to a softer expression by sex, with the baleful light, which made the eyes of the portrait terrible, subdued to a lambent flame in their living counterparts. In her their depths were serene,—though it was the serenity of August skies, which the tempest can momentarily darken as it never does the firmament where flitting clouds make perpetual menace of fainter overshadowings. No casual observer could doubt that the elements of passion lay locked under the somewhat passive exterior: no one intimately acquainted with the character of Sybilla Grueby could conceive that the master passion would ever languish into sentiment in her, as it had in her two elder sisters.

Great therefore were the surprise and gossip of the neighbourhood, and unbounded the astonishment of Sybilla's accepted lover, when on her recovery from a sharp but short illness she informed that gentleman, kindly but firmly, that their engagement must terminate. Remonstrance and entreaty alike failed to shake this determination, though she received both in a subdued, and even humble spirit, which seemed scarcely consonant with her temperament. But on her refusing to give a reason for her conduct, indignation, not unnaturally, drove all other sentiments out of her ill-used lover's breast. He abruptly quitted her and the neighbourhood, and ultimately the country; and for years nothing more was heard of him at the Grange.

It did not pass unnoticed, that Sybilla's sisters refused to join in the efforts made to combat what appeared her causeless caprice; though it was no secret that the hopes which each had severally resigned for herself had devolved upon her, and their disappointment at their frustration was likely to be only less great than that of the discarded lover's. On the contrary, they treated her with the tenderness they might have evinced, had she been the victim of another's caprice instead o. the sacrifice of

her own. And all their tenderness was needed, as soon grew painfully apparent. Sybilla's clouded spirit and altered manner bore testimony that, whatever the source of her strange resolves, changed affection for the object she had banished was not it. Her tall form drooped, her fine features grew sharp, and her manner, which had before been suave and equable, became uneven and petulant. She aged so rapidly that a very few years sufficed to make the difference in that respect between herself and her sisters scarcely distinguishable. Blight did all the work of time, and at a far more rapid pace. Meanwhile, time, neither to be hastened nor stayed at the instance of the happy or the unhappy, continued to cast his shadows over the Grange, while three aged women wore away an unenjoying and monotonous existence there.

Upon that stagnation of life one day broke in an incident disturbing, as a dropped stone the scum that gathers on the surface of a pool, the torpor which during fifteen years had been settling down upon that isolated household. A strange visitor of foreign aspect presented himself at the Grange, on the plea of urgent business with the younger Miss Grueby. He was received by the three sisters in company, and, after the first general salutation, turned with much seeming perplexity from one to another, as if in doubt to which his errand specially lay. This uncertainty was presently relieved by an exclamation from one of them : "Reginald ! "

"Sybil ! is it possible, so changed ? "

"Changed indeed, since *you* fail to recognize me," she replied, though her own recognition of her former lover, under the changes wrought by time and travel, had only been worked out by close and continuous scrutiny from the moment of his entrance.

"Sybil!" he resumed, after the first emotions of surprise had subsided, "I do not come to reproach you with my wasted years : had I cherished such a purpose, what I now see must have put it to flight. But I have suffered, too, and my presence here is evidence that the wound has not closed in me any more than in yourself. I come to make a request, which I think you will not now refuse to grant. Tell me, why was our engagement broken ? "

"The time is past, and the circumstances are changed," she replied, "that made me keep it from you. You have dearly earned the right to know, and you shall."

The communication Sybilla made in the diffuse manner almost universally characterizing the relation of events occurring to the narrator, may be more succinctly put in the third person.

"YOU ARE WAITED FOR IN THE OAK PARLOUR ! "

Sharp and distinct like the tones of a bell, these words sounded in Sybilla Grueby's ear, as starting up from a midnight sleep she hastily put aside the curtain and looked forth into the dim lamp-lit chamber to discover the speaker.

In vain. There was no one to be seen : whoever had been the bearer

of the message must have left the room immediately on delivering it, for the sound had scarce died on her ear before her hand had thrust aside the curtains and her eye been disappointed in its search. Surprised at this, and, moreover, disturbed at the singularity of the summons at such an hour, Sybil hastily arose, and throwing on a chamber robe, took up the lamp and went out into the gallery. There her ear was instantly assailed by those low sobs and moans which seldom intermitted at night, on that battle-field of conflicting air-currents; but such sounds were too familiar to her to attract attention, though she fancied she caught amongst them the tones of a human voice, the sole indication that any of the household besides herself was astir. At the staircase a stronger gust made the flame of her lamp flicker up, and cast a bright glimmer over the painting which caught Sybil's passing glance. It was but a momentary one, yet it made her start and rub her eyes, for it seemed to her that the features of Ralph had vanished from the canvas; one uniform cloud of blackness appeared to cover the entire surface. Probably the paramount curiosity to learn who awaited her below prevented Sybil's stopping to convince herself that this was an illusion, for, though wondering, she did not arrest her steps, but pressed on to the place of rendezvous.

Her first impression on entering the room and looking around, was one of disappointment, quickly succeeded, however, by surprise that nothing met her glance but the familiar articles of furniture standing about in such disorder as she remembered to have left them in on retiring to rest, and wearing that Merlin's-cave aspect of life arrested in full career, which pervades all familiar daylight haunts when come upon in dead of night. Under the feeble glimmer of her solitary lamp the night-birds were naturally in high feather, but beyond their restless wings the apartment showed no sign of the presence of movement since the last occupant had quitted it overnight. Then for the first time a doubt arose in Sybil's mind of the reality of her summons, which a little reflection turned into a conviction that she had suffered herself to become the dupe of a dream. The thought curled her lip with a smile as she turned to give a parting look around; but that look encountered something which caused the smile's instant subsidence into an indefinable expression pervading all her features; something which rooted her feet to the floor, and riveted her eyes upon the hearth.

Not all at once was Sybilla conscious of the nature or the form of what so fixed her attention, and inspired that feeling of which the strange expression on her countenance was the index. One moment she could almost fancy the outline of a human figure was developing out of the gloom; the next, it had vanished, and the wainscot carving that had been momentarily intercepted, showed distinctly on the same spot. Now it gathered substance and seemed acquiring the roundness of life: anon it undulated, and wavered, and finally dissipated as a column of thin vapour might which a side-breath had taken. Sybilla could not define to herself the motive which held her such a passive witness of these mutations. It was

not fear, nor scarcely curiosity, but rather the mood in which the dreamy gaze is held captive by the smoke wreaths as they go up from the hearth, and make themselves cars for the soul's fancies to mount upon, without confining within themselves the view of the passengers they carry.

But the car in which Sybilla's fancies were embarked presently imprisoned them—abstracted the view beyond, and concentrated upon itself the whole of her faculties; and precisely as the stages of this change occurred, more definite and denser grew under her eyes a shape in which she at length recognized the lineaments of her painted ancestor. And with that recognition came upon her a paralyzing dread: a desire to fly from the fearful presence; to cry aloud for help; but tongue and limbs failed her; the very sources of life seemed drying up under the eyes which glowed more and more, like igniting coals, till their blaze turned her lamp's flame to a sickly pallor, and seemed to shoot fiery arrows into her own. Half senseless she fell upon a couch, and covered her eyes with her hands, trying to think she was not mad.

Then the consciousness of those blazing orbs resting on her unseen, grew more intolerable to bear than their scathing light; and again she arose to face her dread visitant. It stood on precisely the same spot, in the same attitude of waiting, but was now beckoning her to approach. Though rebellious to her own will, her limbs seemed given over to the mastery of a stronger, for without her volition they bore her to the side of the dreaded being, and there fixed her, while it, with a touch of its shadowy hand, pressed back a panel on the chimney-breast, and drew from behind a parchment scroll. Close up under Sybilla's eyes the figure then held the instrument, and traced line by line from top to bottom with its finger, while to the stupefied gazer a maze of uncouth characters seemed to start out under the ghostly index in its progress. But the power of taking in distinct impressions was fast leaving her. With a terrible effort she forced a shriek from her lips, and on the instant the lamp fell from her hand, and a heavy sigh swept past her ear—the last sensation that gained admittance to her brain.

Slowly consciousness came back to Sybilla. A sense of chill and numbness through all her frame, and a dull ache at the brain, were her first impressions of returning life. As her senses grew capable of taking in external objects, the grey morning light showed her that she was lying before the hearth of the Oak Parlour; but how she came there, as of all the other incidents of the night, she was for the time utterly oblivious. Under a confused impression of something unusual having happened to her, she struggled to her feet, and managed to regain her chamber and throw herself on the bed, where almost immediately a heavy sleep fell upon her, as though she had drained some lethal draught.

The apartment in Grueby Grange designated the Oak Parlour, was a long chamber on the ground-floor, low of pitch, and sombre of aspect, in spite of several narrow casements with which its outer wall was pierced. This sombreness was due to the oak panelling, which encased not only the walls, but covered the ceiling as well, and which gave it its distinctive

appellation. Set in a heavy framework, to which age had given the hue of ebony, each panel bore some carved device of a grotesque mask, or flower, or arabesque scroll-work. The one which occupied the post of honour, viz. the centre of the chimney-breast, bore an exact counterpart of that device which left so much room for speculation in its connection with the legend over the entrance door. From the prominence given to the design among the ornaments of this, the state apartment of the Grange, an inference might be drawn that the builder designed to keep perpetually under the eyes of his successors a reminder of his earliest injunction—whatever that had reference to. Dragons, hippocrits, and other strange creatures that never entered the ark of Noah, were set as a sort of guard of honour round this centre panel in all conceivable attitudes—volant, couchant, rampant, or simply regardant. Similar ones were scattered about other parts, but here they seemed massed, as at a sort of headquarters. Indeed the entire apartment bore no inconsiderable resemblance to a Brobdingnagian inversion of one of those heirloom chests which were almost invariably to be found, four or five generations back, amid the plenishing of the yeoman household, and in which the stock of homespun linen kept company with the good man's Sunday suit of blue, and the fair dame's crimson paduasoy.

In this apartment were the two elder ladies of the Grange one morning awaiting their sister to join them at the early meal.

"Look, Magdalen!" exclaimed one who had approached one of the windows. "See, the storm that shook the house so fearfully last night, and threatened to bury us all under its ruins, has made a scapegoat of the old dial." And sure enough, out in the forecourt, there lay that hoary contemner of the hours, broken at the shaft, and so cut off from all repentance for its misspent past. The incident was not without a certain suggestiveness to the on-lookers, and they both turned from its contemplation with a little shudder which told that it was not lost upon them.

"Why," exclaimed one, as her foot struck against some object on the floor, "surely this is Sybil's lamp! how came it here?"

"And she is half an hour past her time," returned the other, consulting her watch; "she must be oversleeping herself. I will go and call her, Mabel."

The sleep Sybil was found in was no light slumber to be broken by such gentle applications as usually suffice to waken the morning sleeper, and they soon desisted from the attempt; and, instead, set an anxious watch till nature itself should release her chained senses, for that she was under some abnormal condition was evident even to unpractised eyes.

When she did at length awake, it was to talk of such events as made her alarmed sisters believe her in the delirium of a fever. Vividly, as though each incident was transpiring under her eyes at the moment of relation, she described all that had befallen her through that trying night. And as the sisters listened, their first suspicion gradually gave way before the coherence of her manner, which formed so great a contrast to the matter of her discourse, and they were fain to think she had dreamt

these things, and had not yet arrived at a conviction of their unreality. But when this view was suggested to the patient, she repudiated it so earnestly, that it occurred to the others, in order to dispel such a mischievous delusion, it would be well to have the wainscoting taken down at the spot she spoke of, to demonstrate how baseless were the circumstances her fancy connected with it. In this proposal Sybil eagerly acquiesced, though with quite opposite expectations to those entertained by her sisters. No time was lost in carrying out this purpose. A workman was sent for, and under his tools the three centuries' pride of the great rose-panel fell; for the strange beasts about it suffered themselves to be despoiled of their charge as tamely as though they had been a lot of silly sheep, instead of the fierce ban-dogs they assumed to be.

The removal of the panel laid bare a small recess in the stone-work, whence, from under a thick coating of dust, the man presently drew a short cylindrical packet, the sight of which greatly agitated Sybilla, who had insisted on being present, in spite of all remonstrance. Her emotion increased when, on unrolling the packet, it proved to be a small sheet of parchment covered with writing. "I have looked on that before," she exclaimed, in a voice that shook with emotion. "Are you satisfied that this is something more than a dream?"

For a few minutes the influence of the strange circumstances attending the discovery of the instrument suspended curiosity to learn its purport. When they became tranquillized enough to seek to decipher the writing, they found no easy task lay before them, for not only was it traced in a cramp monkish hand, but the colour had nearly fled from the ink. Added to which, the language and orthography was not quite the vernacular of the eighteenth century. Perseverance at length surmounting these difficulties, the readers were startled at finding themselves the recipients of a direct message from an ancestor whose hand might be supposed to have crumbled into dust nearly three centuries before this missive of his fell into their hands.

Bating Chaucerian eccentricities of spelling, the following is a transcript of the terms in which the founder addressed the last of his line:—

"I, RALPH OF GRUBYE, for present ease of conscience, and future deliverance from the pains of purgatory, do make confession of wrongous seizing of the lands of Grubye from the infant heirs of Godefroi Wibrowe, who were to me left in trust. But in the interest of my liege lord Henry the King, and by indulgence of holy Church, I do purpose to hold the same for me and mine while my line shall last. But for my soul's health, as before recited, I do strictly enjoin restitution to be made to the surviving heirs, lineally descended from the said G. W., when my race has passed away: in furtherance of which meritorious intention I have caused this deed to be drawn and lodged in a sur place to secure the execution thereof: and so may the Blessed Mary and good Saint Nicolas, my patron, stand by me in the day of dolor!"

(Signed)

RALPH X OF GRUBYE.
mark

Taken under seal of Confession by me,

RAYMOND,

Clerk at the Shrine of S. Nicolas.

bis

Thus was Grueby's rose plucked, and therewith, as the legend prophesied, were plucked up house and land; for whether Grim Ralph reaped the anticipated benefits of his rather peculiar notions of meritorious restitution or no, his descendants, through whom he proposed to perform his vicarious good works, conceived that no other course was open to them but to carry out to the letter the intentions of the ancestor, who, in his own person, drove such a keen bargain for both worlds. In this conclusion Sybilla fully concurred, though feeling that all the sacrifice was really to be made by herself. They agreed that a demise, in regular form, should be made by the last survivor, of all the estates of Grueby to the discoverable heirs of G. W.; and, in pursuance of that resolution, they personally set on foot inquiries which resulted in the legateeship of old Andrew, as mentioned at the opening.

But though taking conscientious precautions for securing the return of the property to the line of its original owners, until the explanation given by Sybilla to her lover, the Grueby ladies had not thought it expedient to make any confidants of the foregoing circumstances—with one exception, one whom few family secrets escape, the doctor. He being consulted in the illness that fell upon Sybilla, consequent on that shock to her system, detected a disturbance without a visible cause. Being a man of science, he had learnt that there are no such things as effects without causes, and so he put a few probing questions, which brought out the whole story.

That particular curer of bodies chanced to be one of those who do not narrow their views to their calling; and he especially prided himself on being provided with a theory to fit every possible mental phenomenon. He pho-pho'd the poor ghost as a matter of course, and admirably demonstrated that it all grew out of a derangement of the gastric functions, whereby an unhealthy excitement of the cerebral organ had been produced. Some legend had lodged itself in the brain, he said, in some by-past and forgotten time, and lain hidden till, in a restless fit, that organ set about routing out its old cupboards. Then the forgotten fragment turned up in a dream as a revelation, forsooth!—a thing of every-day experience, my dear madam!—said the perfectly satisfied doctor.

Answered Miss Grueby, pertinently enough, her eyes couched by that parchment scroll:—no more talk of the doings of Her of En-dor in the Oak Parlour after that, I promise you!—“ But the document, doctor, that at least was never brought out of one of those old cupboards you speak of, for there existed no legend referring to it.”

The man of science shrugged his shoulders;—an infallible resource for the philosopher who accounts for everything, when confronted by a perverse fact which won't be accounted for. Then, when this process of inoculation for incredulity had had time to work, he glibly launched out upon remarkable coincidences, and—but upon this with more reserve, as of a thing he would by no means commit his philosophy to—of abnormal powers of perception, supposed to be evolved from certain conditions of brain. At all events, he concluded—and on his wisdom here there is not

likely to be two opinions—let the patient dismiss all thoughts of having been the subject of a supernatural visitation ; take tonics, and use light diet and moderate exercise ; and he would stake his professional reputation on no more being seen of the ghost—at least by Miss Sybilla.

No more *was* ever seen of the ghost ; though whether that was due to the doctor's having laid it, or, having accomplished its object, it laid itself, may be an open question. The parties most concerned may have been perfectly satisfied of the correctness of the doctor's theory, and still held to their own inferences from the facts. Certain it is, that the portrait on the stair was thenceforward provided with a curtain, to the great contentment of the domestics at the Grange ; and the Oak Parlour was shut up, Miss Grueby saying that her eyes were not so young as they once were, and she found the dark shade of the wainscot incommoded them.

Sybil's lover, at the end of her relation, declared himself still unable to discover the reason for her behaviour towards him.

For answer, she reminded him of the portionless condition in which the determination come to by her sisters and herself regarding the property left her ; and hinted that it was because she knew that his generosity might disregard this, she shrank from making the communication. He could not but recognize the motive of her self-sacrifice, while he bitterly lamented the mistake of persisting in it till it was too late to remedy it.

It *was* too late to bring back health and youth, and the hopes that waited on these fifteen years before. Reginald departed to resume once more his wandering life ; and Sybilla fell back on the stagnation that rots itself away for want of movement—diverse results of one unhappy mistake.

The sisters were gathered in due time to the company of their unquiet ancestor in the family vault, the last survivor of them happening to be Miss Sybilla. By her the property was bequeathed, as previously arranged, such explanations being made to the family lawyer as she deemed desirable to vindicate the will he was instructed to frame.

Grueby Grange was pulled down—that being a condition of the bequest—and the ploughshares of nearly a hundred springs have passed over the site since ; but Ralph Grueby's ghost still has a shadowy existence in the traditions of the country people, though the part it played in determining the ownership of Grueby is forgotten. A scion of old Andrew, fifth in direct descent, and at this time a gentleman commoner of a crack college in Oxford, probably never heard of the woodman of Theberton Crossways ; and if he were told, would not believe the teller. So does the whirligig of Time bring round his revenges ; and so runs the world away !

Vidocq and the Sansons.

AMONG my Parisian acquaintances was M. Appert. He was the almoner to the Queen of the French. In the discharge of his duties he was brought into contact with all the vagabondism and profligacy of Paris; he was familiar with the haunts of rascaldom when out of the hands of justice, and with the most distinguished of the representatives of rascaldom when justice had seized them for its prey. In his company I visited and associated with some of the fiercest ruffians and most daring burglars of the French capital. Through him I was brought into personal contact with Sanson the executioner, and Vidocq the spy. I will record a few reminiscences connected with his name and history. I dined with him on one occasion (it was about the third of a century ago), when among the invited guests were Vidocq and the two Sansons (father and son—the headsman's office being an inheritance). Several gentlemen known in the literary world were present. In no other place than Paris could there have been such a *service de table*. And the meeting was more remarkable, as it was the first time that Sanson had ever seen the man who had furnished him with so much food for the guillotine; and it gave Vidocq the opportunity of making many inquiries as to the deportment of illustrious victims in the *moment suprême* of violent death.

Sanson the father was a man of huge size—of stature more than six feet—of a placid and serious expression of countenance. He might have passed for a country gentleman “at ease in his possessions.” I could have pointed out a “turtle-loving alderman” or two to whom he bore a resemblance. He answered every question with the greatest serenity and gravity. He called the instrument of death “la mécanique,” and in my intercourse with him I never heard the word “guillotine” or knife fall from his lips. He was disposed to be taciturn, but less so than his son, who appeared to look upon his father with a considerable amount of reverence, and took no part in the conversation except when specially addressed. The son was a man of ordinary appearance, of the common height, of a sallowy look. No one would have noticed him in a crowd. Vidocq was a short man, vivacious, vain, and talkative. He seemed to consider the interest he excited as the recognition of a claim which everybody must allow. He liked to be the narrator of his own great deeds, of which he was ostentatiously proud; and on the stage where he played his part—whether tragic or comic—he would always be the prime actor.

Many of the tales which Vidocq related may be found in the memoirs which he afterwards published; but no printed narrative could convey an idea of the hilarity—the enthusiasm—I might say the eloquence with

which he spoke of some of his successful feats. "Do you remember the great burglary at the Batignolles? That was a scheme of robbery and murder on a grand scale. It was soon after I joined the public service—long before it was known that I had anything to do with the authorities. But I was a party consulted as to all the preparations for breaking into the house, for securing the property, and for disposing of any person who should resist. It was determined, *coûte qui coûte*, that the work should be done. The spoil was considerable; and I was named the leader of the expedition. We were all well armed; the arrangements were directed by me, and they were perfect. But I had settled with the police that a certain number of them should be planted in a neighbouring house, and that they were to rush forward and capture us all when I fired a pistol from a window that was pointed out. *L'effraction fut faite*, and I was as busy as the rest in gathering up the spoils. I made my way to the room from whence it had been agreed the pistol should be fired. The police rushed to the doors at the signal, and the whole gang was captured, I among the number. Not one of them had the slightest idea that I had been a party to their betrayal; but murder had been committed before the arrest took place, and two of the robbers were ordered for execution. I saw them on their way to the Place de Grève, as the cart was conveying them to be executed. They recognized me in the crowd. I fancy I saw on their faces the knowledge that I had 'fait leur affaire.' My depositions were not necessary to their conviction. Tell me, Monsieur Sanson, do you recollect the circumstance? How did they die?" Sanson—"They died cursing their betrayers."

Vidocq gave us an account of the manner in which, while in gaol, he carried on the courtship with his wife. She was a felon like himself, and inhabited a separate and remote prison. Much correspondence passed between them by the collusion and co-operation of keepers and convicts, who fancied they owed a sort of fealty to so distinguished a member of the profession. Each had been well acquainted with the other while carrying on their schemes of fraud, and each came to the conclusion that it would be wiser and better to be the helpers and the instruments rather than the foes and the victims of the law. When both were released and the nuptials celebrated, it was their amusement to recount to each other their hair-breadth escapes and strange adventures, and to moralize on the sweetness of adversity. Vidocq talked of the heroic character of his fiancée, and of the risks she had run and the dangers she had encountered *dans l'intérêt de nos amours*. But he pronounced her a most faithful and a most useful wife; and when Vidocq established himself in Paris as a discoverer and restorer of lost and stolen property—a profession he exercised on his own account, after his connection with the police had terminated—his wife became to him a valuable auxiliary. They were both well acquainted with the mysterious hierarchy of crime.

There was then no criminal under sentence of death, "only," Sanson said, "as you, gentlemen, are interested in such proceedings, you shall, if

you like, have an opportunity of seeing all the details. I will have an *homme de paille* got ready, and if you do me the honour of visiting me at my domicile, where the *mécanique* is kept, I will have my assistants ready, and everything shall be done that would be done at the Place de Grève, so that you may have the means of seeing how efficiently the work is effected." Such an invitation was not to be rejected—to witness a bloodless execution performed by so distinguished a functionary. Our party consisted of the late Earl of Durham, Mr. Edward Ellice, Mr. Dawson Damer, M. Appert, and the writer of these lines. Sanson lived in one of the suburbs of Paris. We went to it along the Canal de l'Ourcq. We reached a very pretty cottage, standing alone in a garden kept in high order, full of flowers. The house and windows were painted in gay colours, principally of a bright green, and we were introduced into a well-furnished, nicely adorned apartment, when the host came to welcome us. He told us that his emoluments, once large, had, from the diminished number of capital punishments, been much reduced, and though he had *de quoi vivre*, where-withal to live, his *état* was very different now from what it had been in other —query better (?)—days. This may have been an apology for our finding no repast prepared in return for M. Appert's hospitality. He repeated to us that the office had been for generations hereditary in his race. Marriages had been generally confined to families connected with the same profession, of which there were several in the provinces.

Sanson gave many particulars of what had happened on memorable occasions between the moment when he had received the *condamné* from the prison authorities, and that in which the task was completed by him as the *exécuteur des hautes œuvres*. He stated—and we had afterwards an opportunity of verifying the fact—that the *procès verbaux* of every public execution were kept with the utmost accuracy. He asserted that it had never been otherwise in the worst times of the French Revolution; which most assuredly would prove that the number of sufferers, as ordinarily reported and believed, must have been enormously exaggerated. Possibly all such statistics should be received with much distrust, but in reaching any authentic source of information, one is always impressed with the conviction that political passion on all sides leads to enormous misrepresentation, and reported as they are under the influence of vehement excitement, the records of contemporaneous annalists should be received with much distrust. He repeated again and again that the amount of physical suffering from the fall of the axe and the separation of the head from the body, was exceedingly small—that death was instantaneous—that in the whole of his experience he had never seen a voluntary motion of the muscles after decapitation—that the stories of the opening and closing of the eyelids after execution were inventions contradicted by the whole of his observations, without a single example to the contrary—that the extinction of feeling and of life followed the fatal event immediately and without a single exceptional case.

We asked whether it were possible to see the records—the *procès*

verbœux of executions—of which he had spoken. He produced some volumes, handsomely bound, beautifully written, in whose pages were officialized the details, signed by persons present, of what had taken place at every execution, when the *condamné* was handed over to the *exécuteur*, up to the moment on which the *corpse* was transferred to those who were commissioned to receive it.

He desired us to accompany him to an outhouse. It was a sort of stable, in the centre of which the *mécanique* raised its awful head; it was painted *blood red*—a tall erect frame, much narrower, much higher than that of a common gallows—a massive sloping knife was suspended at the top, a cord hung down by the side of the frame. The assistants stood on a platform below; just above them was a plank, with a round hole for the reception of the head, at the base of which was an opening, through which the axe was to pass in severing the head from the body. The plank moved backwards and forwards in a groove; it was raised by an axle at the two sides perpendicularly. In an instant the sufferer was attached to it by cords: it was then thrown down flat, and moved horizontally forward; at the same moment the cord was pulled, the heavy axe fell down through the iron frame, and a basket was seen to receive the head of the victim almost as soon as the click was heard announcing that the axe had been detached from the beam to which it had been fastened. Then the plank was drawn back, the headless body untied, and Sanson asked us to feel how sharp was the edge and remark how ponderous the weight of the instrument. The edge was certainly sharp as that of a razor, and the momentum was increased by a mass of lead attached to the upper side of the decapitator. Torture or mishap seemed impossible; and yet on one occasion, at Boulogne, through the blundering of the bourreau, the axe got entangled in the rope, and did not descend with force enough to do the dreadful work, and the head of the poor wretch was severed by a knife borrowed for the occasion. I know a gentleman who, in those days, was under the *bâil* of the Bourbon Government for a political offence, which might have been visited with capital punishment, and who was consoled with the assurance that if decapitation were to be his fate, care would be taken to secure him against any defect in the action of the decapitating machinery.

B.